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The overt nature of racism in the United States has morphed into an insidious, covert manifestation called racial microaggression (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Wills, 1978; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Though not often intentional in nature, these microaggressive behaviors have become pervasive in the lives of people of color (Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Extant research reveals the harmful and cumulative effects of racial microaggressions (Sue, Nadal, et al., 2008). Researchers have also found a link between the experiences of African American students and negative psychological, health, and educational outcomes (Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010; Watkins, Labarrie, & Appio, 2010). Much research has been done on people of color's experiences with racial microaggressions; however, few studies have given attention to why some African American college students are able to excel in microaggressive academic environments while others do not. The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent African American students at a predominantly White institution experience racial microaggression in the classroom as well as the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered. A secondary purpose was to identify if there is a relationship between microaggressive encounters and academic outcomes. The final purpose was to explore whether racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. Forty-seven undergraduate students

participated in this study. Results indicated that students' backgrounds impact how they handle microaggressive behaviors. Implications of the findings are presented and suggestions or future research are provided.

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACIAL IDENTITY, MICROAGGRESSIONS, AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOMS OF A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CAMPUS

by

Andrea M. Fernandez

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_____
Committee Chair

To Waldon “Dada” and Ida “Mama” Cole,
for blessing me with unconditional and unbridled love.
I feel both of your spirits with me every day.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation, written by Andrea M. Fernandez, has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____

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Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____

Date of Final Oral Examination

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

Page

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

While sitting in a graduate class at the University of South Florida (USF), I, the only African American in the room, was asked, "Why don't African Americans attend jazz and blues concerts in larger numbers?" Accustomed to being asked to speak for my entire race, I simply replied, "I don't know." Another classmate then chimed in saying, "They can't dance to it." After an exasperated sigh, I asked, "Are you implying that African Americans can only appreciate music if they can dance to it?" His embarrassment was clear as his face grew redder, and a barrage of apologies followed. Later on after class he made sure he caught up to me to tell me that he had African American friends, in Harlem no less! Even though that incident by itself did not appear to have a major impact on me, a number of these incidents over time at USF ignited feelings of isolation, distrust, frustration, and anger. Not knowing how to deal with my feeling and longing to be in an environment where I felt accepted, I eventually left the university and went back home. Conversations with friends and family revealed similar experiences at predominantly White institutions (PWIs). The reactions to these incidents ran the gamut from anger, to laughter, to tears, to indifference. I believe that most of us shared the same strong sense of self and pride as it relates to our African American identity, but we all seemed to handle these incidents differently. Some left school like I did, and others stayed, choosing to ignore the incidents or engaging each experience to

enlighten the offender. What internal processes led us in one direction or the other? Moreover, I thought, if these experiences are difficult for some students in their mid to late twenties, how much more difficult would it be for undergraduates who were younger and trying to adjust to college life? Finally, I wondered, what role does our own racial identity play in how we handle these experiences?

Introduction

Retaining African Americans in higher education has been a critical topic for the past three decades (W. Allen & Solórzano, 2001; S. R. Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, 1992; Parham & Helms, 1985; Ponterotto, Alexander, & Grieger, 1995; Sedlacek, 1987; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; M. S. Thompson, Gorin, Obeidat, & Chen, 2006). Vincent Tinto's (1975) theoretical model of persistence has prompted much debate over student retention and persistence. Tinto (1975) asserts that successful academic and social integration into an institution leads to persistence, and integration is shaped by pre-college characteristics and goals. During the 1970s and 1980s discussion and public policy was focused primarily on access. It was not until the mid-1990s that the discourse shifted to the role that institutions play in the social and cultural integration and retention of minority students (Jensen, 2011). While Tinto's (1975) model has provided a solid foundation for analyzing the factors involved in student retention, recently, scholars have challenged the perspective in Tinto's model that a student's ability to integrate and assimilate into an institution is the student's responsibility. Rendon, Jalomo, and Nora (2004) contend that institutions share responsibility in student's successful integration

into college, and assumptions that students are solely responsible in assimilating into the college culture absolves institutions from addressing their obstacles to retention.

Recent political and legal assaults on affirmative action in college admission, most notably *Fisher v. University of Texas*, provide impetus for examining established approaches to retention of African Americans (Liptak, 2012). Furthermore, the growing changes in racial and ethnic demographics in the United States (U.S.) have major educational implications (Murdock, 1995). The U.S. Census Bureau (2012) projects that half of the U.S. population will be people of color by 2050. Despite these demographic changes, Berrey (2011), C. Clark (2011), and Feagin (2002) contend that discrimination against people of color continues and as such, there is a collective need to develop skills to understand and respect diversity. Feagin (2002) further explains "as the United States becomes more diverse and multiracial, such lack of skill becomes more of a barrier to social and political interactions and cooperation" (p. 7).

Additionally, despite the growing number of minorities in higher education, the achievement gap still exists. While parents of color encourage their children to pursue higher education goals, racism and poverty continue to create disparities. The six-year graduation rates for African Americans are considerably lower (40.5%) than their white counterparts (60.7%; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Moreover, failure to complete higher educational pursuits maintains "the cycle of poverty, lack of job opportunities in the larger society and has detrimental psychological consequences associated with low self- esteem and subjective well-being" (Sue, 2010, p. 236). According to Sue (2010), while the causes for the poor academic performance of African

American students are multidimensional, explanations for higher drop-out rates and lower academic achievement falls in to two categories: (a) causation resides internally, within the individual, group, or culture, and (b) causation resides externally in the system of the academic classroom and societal environment. Harry, Klingner, and Hart (2005) note that school personnel often connect poor academic performance to students' internal characteristics or their parents. While there may be some truth to these assertions, Sue (2010) cautions that this line of thinking leads to blaming the victim and attributes failure to personal or group deficiencies. Moreover, blaming the victim implies that changing the victim is the solution.

There is no denying that internal factors do contribute to academic achievement; however, ignoring external factors such as racism, discrimination, and poverty diminishes a large piece of the achievement gap puzzle. African American students report that curriculum, teaching styles, and classroom climates are unwelcoming, leaving them feeling out of place and uncomfortable (Boysen, Vogel, Hubbard, & Cope, 2009; Feagin, 2002; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Watkins, Green, Goodson, Guidry, & Stanley, 2007). Furthermore, even though higher education administrators, faculty, and staff may attempt to appear fair and unbiased in their practices, students' experiences are quite different (Bowser, Young, & Jones, 1993). To address these issues, Griffith et al. (2007) and Jones (1997) recommend critical analysis of and systemic approaches to dismantling racism. While much research focuses on either the internal or external causation of low retention rates in higher education, Sue (2010) suggests that neither approach—individual focus and system focus—taken to the extreme "tells the whole story" (p. 239). A

solution that addresses the convergence of both the external and internal causes serves to create more viable and practical solutions to the achievement gap and retention problems.

Few studies have examined the convergence of racial identity—internal factor and microaggression—external factor in an effort to identify African American undergraduate students' experiences with racial microaggressions (subtle statements or behaviors, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory messages toward people of color; Sue, 2010) at predominantly white institutions (PWI) and identifying if there is a relationship between racial identity and how students handle microaggression. Therefore, the remainder of this chapter contains current issues that African American students face when exposed to racism and specifically microaggressions in higher education. It also briefly describes the role that racial identity plays in influencing an individual's perception of self, others, and environment; that is followed by the statement of the problem as well as the purpose and significance of the study. The chapter concludes with a definition of the terms and research questions.

Racism in Higher Education

Institutions of higher education are considered by many to be bastion of diversity, equity, and freedom of expression. As increasing numbers of students from varying ethnic and racial backgrounds enter college, researchers have shown an increased interest in the racial structure of higher education (W. Allen & Solórzano, 2001; S. Harper, 2009b; S. R. Harper, 2006; S. R. Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Njorari, 2012; Parham & Helms, 1985; Saenz, Nagi, & Hurtado, 2007; Sedlacek, 1987; Solórzano et al., 2000). The growing racial and ethnic demographic changes that have been occurring in the

United States have considerable educational implications (W. R. Allen, Bonous, Hammarth, & Teranishi, 2006; S. R. Harper & Quaye, 2009; Murdock, 1995). Feagin (2002) suggests that this demographic change will impact, "voting constituencies, legislatures, educational systems, justice systems, and many other governmental practices" (p. 5).

As increasing numbers of African American students embark upon the campuses of predominantly White institutions (PWI) with unique and distinctive experiences that impact their development and academic success (Chavous, 2000; Njorari, 2012; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1998; Tinto, 1993), many of them report feeling isolated and marginalized (Cooper, 2012; Feagin, 2002). Bean and Eaton's (2001) retention theory asserts that "an individual enters an institution with psychological attributes shaped by particular experiences, abilities, and self-assessments" (p. 75). Often, once there, African American students encounter a culture and environment that appear to be ambivalent towards their educational needs, show a lack of appreciation for their cultural heritage, and practice obvious privileging of majority values; as a result, they have difficulty adjusting to their campus environments (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Biasco, Goodwin, & Vitale, 2001; Cooper, 2012; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1998). Research has shown that racial discrimination on campuses is a hindrance to African American student's integration into the university's social and academic environments (Johnson & Arbona, 2006; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; Tinto, 1993; Utsey, Chae, Brown, & Kelly, 2002; Watkins, Green, Goodson, Guidry, & Stanley, 2007). According to Terrell (1996), students of color at PWIs noted that they often felt the need to adjust their behaviors to

match those of the members of the White middle class in regards to ways of acting, talking, and dressing. The dominant group, which includes classmates, faculty, and administrators, often perceived cultural differences as an inability to adjust.

Higher education is not just a vehicle to get out of poverty it is also fertile ground for the cultivation of ideas and tools that will help students to change their communities and ultimately the world. However, institutions continue to struggle with racial tensions that exist between African American students and faculty, staff, and administrators (Boysen et al., 2009; Suarez-Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Rowan, & Andrews-Guillen, 2003). Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to recognize the negative impact of racism on African American students and establish policies to help alleviate racial tensions. According to King (2000),

> Access to higher education does not end when an applicant receives a letter of admission. When admitted students begin their studies, faculty, and staff have an obligation to create campus environments that are conducive to students' successful completion of their educational goals. Creating such environments has become more complicated as the student population becomes more diverse. For with different groups of students come different student needs and expectations of college life. (p. 4)

Exploring how African American students who encounter racism on the campuses of PWIs deal with these experiences will provide insight and tools for college administrators, faculty, and staff to address how they meet the needs of African American students on these campuses. Moreover, understanding the relationship among racism, racial identity, and academic success will provide understanding of the factors that influence academic success of African American students.

Microaggression: Impact and Issues

Over the past four decades, the "old-fashioned" type of racism seemed to have vanished due to the Civil Rights Movement and rulings from the Supreme Court (Sue & Sue, 2008). In recent years, research has been done on more contemporary forms of racism (Buckard & Knox, 2004; Hinton, 2004; Smedley & Smedley, 2005; Sue 2010) as the nature of racial discrimination in America has morphed into more insidious, subtle, and often automatic expressions called *microaggressions* (DeVos & Banaji, 2005; C. Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez, & Wills, 1978; Sue, 2010). *Microaggressions* have been defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007, p. 72). A much more poignant definition asserts that microaggressions are:

> subtle, innocuous, preconscious, or unconscious degradations, and putdowns, often kinetic but capable of being verbal and/or kinetic. In and of itself a microaggression may seem harmless, but the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence. (C. Pierce, 1995, p. 281)

In their research in clinical psychology, Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2007) have delineated three types of microaggressions: (1) microassaults; (2) microinsults; and (3) microinvalidations. *Microassaults* are similar to what would be considered "old-fashioned racism" in that it is an explicit verbal or nonverbal attack meant to purposefully hurt the recipient. For example, referring to someone as the "N" word or deliberately overlooking the raised hand of a student of color and calling on a White student instead.

Microinsults occur when Whites demean an individual's heritage or identity; for instance, when faculty members make comments to African American students complimenting their ability to articulate well. The implication is that, in general, African Americans are not intelligent. *Microinvalidations* are invalidations or negations of the thoughts, feelings, or reality of African Americans. For example, statements like "I don't see color" or "we are all human beings" convey the message that the cultural experiences of African Americans are invalid. The unspoken implications of all racial microaggressions are that people of color are deficient, irrelevant, and deserving of marginalized status (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Microinvalidations are present when the contributions of people of color are neglected in curriculums; as a result, White students are affirmed and African American students "feel their identities are constantly assailed in the classroom. African American students are likely to expend considerable emotional energy protecting their own integrity, while at the same time being distracted from fully engaging in the learning process" (Sue, 2010, p. 10). Another example of microinvalidation occurs when White faculty characterize African American communication as abnormal by indicating that African American students are becoming too emotional (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Sue, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2008).

Researchers are starting to examine students' reactions, coping strategies, and emotional responses to microaggressive experiences (Waterford, Rivas, Burciaga, & Solórzano, 2006). The invisibility of microaggressions can create confusion and disillusionment for victims because the intent is not always clear. The perpetrator may not have intended to engage in microaggressive behavior, and the victim may not be sure

if the behavior was meant as an insult (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Furthermore, racial microaggression produces "psychological dilemmas that unless adequately resolved can lead to increased levels of racial anger, mistrust, and loss of self-esteem for persons of color" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 275). Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2007) contend that racial microaggressions lead to negative outcomes for the recipient. Due to the covert and unconscious nature of racial microaggressions, they are often dismissed by the perpetrator as being insignificant; however, for African Americans, the cumulative nature of these seemingly insignificant acts can have deleterious effects and create feelings of marginalization (Broman, Mavaddat, & Hsu, 2000; Carter, 2007; R. Clark, Anderson, Clark & Williams, 1999; Feagin & Sykes, 1994; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Ridley, 2005; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, Nadal, et al., 2008; Utsey & Hook, 2007; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Recent literature suggests that microaggression in higher education is particularly critical. According to Constantine's (2007) study, professors take on multiple roles with their students such as instructor, advisor, and supervisor. These roles put the professor in an evaluative role, which creates a power hierarchy making it difficult to confront the perpetrator. This present study was aimed at identifying if there is a connection between how African American students cope with racial microaggressions in the classroom and where they are in their racial identity development.

Role of Racial Identity

Racial identity is defined as "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common heritage with a particular racial group"

(Helms, 1993, p. 3). Cross's (1971, 1991, 1995a) model of racial identity describes the process of moving from unexamined and often negative emphasis on individual racial identity to a more highly emphasized and positive perspective. Racial identity is developed over time through various experiences and aids in navigating racist encounters. (Cross & Cross, 2008; Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Strage (1999) posits that students from different backgrounds each have their own unique strengths that they use as buffers or shock absorbers as they face exigencies characteristic of their environment. Cross (1995a) and J. S. Phinney (1993) suggest that internalized racial identity serves as a buffer against the nocuous impact of racism. Moreover, a positive racial identity contributes holistically to an overall feeling of confidence in one's abilities and, as a result, can lead to positive academic outcomes (Ogbu, 2008).

Foundational theories of identity development (Erikson, 1963; Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and developmental models of racial identity (Cross, 1971, 1991; J. Phinney, 1990) highlight the importance of identity exploration in developing a healthy identity. According to Kroger (2007) identity development is a primary psychosocial task of late adolescence, which has substantial implications for healthy psychosocial development. Identity development is of particular urgency when college students, on the verge of adulthood, are faced with major life choices and a myriad of possibilities from which to choose (McLean, 2005). Additionally, for African American students, negotiating racial identity is not only critical to overall identity development (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Helms, 1995), but it also has implications for academic achievement (Chavous et al., 2003), psychological adjustment (Rowley, Sellers,

Chavous, & Smith, 1998) and physical health (Brondolo, Brady Ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009). As a result, research that examines whether or not African American students at certain stages of their racial identity development are better able to deal with racial microaggression can begin to inform the higher education community on the best practices to address student needs and provide these students with tools to cope with microaggressive behaviors. This research can also bring awareness to staff, faculty, administrators, and other students who unconsciously engage in microaggressive behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

The previous section introduced current research pertaining to the retention of African Americans in higher education and the roles that racism and particularly microaggression play in the ever-widening achievement gap. Additionally, research has shown that there is a relationship between certain dimensions of racial identity, increased exposure, vulnerability, and chronic racism (Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, Schmeelk-Cone, Chavous, & Zimmerman, 2004; Sellers, Copeland-Linder, Martin, & Lewis, 2006; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). In the discussion on how to retain African American students at predominantly White institutions, it is essential to question current assumptions regarding what factors are necessary to yield self-efficacy and retention of African American students at PWIs. Some researchers have found that a strong identification with one's racial group can lessen the impact of discrimination and serve as a protective component for education (Chavous et al., 2003; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001; Cross, 1995a; J. S. Phinney, 1993). Other researchers have argued that there is no direct relationship

between academic achievement and racial identity; however, it depends on the institutional contexts in which students are negotiating (Davidson, 1996). There has not been a significant amount of research on this relationship (Sellers & Shelton, 2003), nor has there been much research that specifically investigates how African American students' responses to racial microaggressions in the classrooms of PWIs are moderated by racial identity. Unfortunately, African American students continue to face racial microaggressions in the classroom and while the impact of this can be detrimental to students, there is little research on how students cope with these microaggressive behaviors.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because African American and other minority students, who are entering undergraduate programs at PWIs in increasing numbers, face racial microaggressions on campus (Solórzano et al., 2000). Since racial microaggressions have been found to be pervasive in everyday life and in academic settings (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007), it is important to help African American undergraduate students develop skills to address this new more subtle type of racism; more specifically, learn how to handle or respond to those who have exhibited racial microaggressions. Furthermore, it is important to inform higher education institutions about racial microaggressions. It is hoped that contributing to the growing literature on racial microaggression on college campuses will provide a starting point for increased understanding of what microaggressions are and how institutions can create safe spaces

for minority students to address them and ultimately increase student retention and positive academic and social outcomes for students of color.

Definition of Terms

Microassaults are "explicit racial derogatives meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274).

Microinsults are "communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity, and demean a person's racial heritage identity" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274).

Microinvalidations are "invalidations or negations of the thoughts, feelings, or reality of Black Americans" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274).

Racial Identity is a term used to describe a multidimensional construct based on the extent to which an individual feels connected to a particular racial group.

Racial Microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274).

Theoretical Framework

In the 1970s, Critical Race Theory (CRT) emerged in the legal field after the Civil Rights Movement. The primary goal of CRT scholars and activists such as Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado is to better society by examining and transforming the relationships between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This theory is rooted in two major movements: critical legal studies and radical feminism.

Although its roots are in the legal field, it has extended outside that field to disciplines such as education, political science, and ethnic studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT was introduced to the field of education by Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) and is utilized by educational researchers, in part, to address and counter current ideologies regarding schooling that marginalize racial minorities (Ladson-Billings & Donnor, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). According to CRT theorists Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), "theories about race must be analyzed explicitly within educational research—in addition to class and gender-based theories—if we are to sufficiently address inequality in the United States" (as cited in Minikel-Lacocque, 2013, p. 437). CRT situates racial inequalities in education, challenges the ways that the interplay between race and schooling are conceived in education, focuses on the experiences of people of color, and addresses injustice (Minikel-Lacocque, 2013). Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, and Solórzano (2004) have identified five unifying themes of CRT: (a) intercentricity of race and racism; (b) challenge to dominant ideology; (c) centrality of experiential knowledge; (d) interdisciplinary perspective; and (e) commitment to social justice. A more in depth explanation of the themes follows.

CRT Recognizes the Intercentricity of Race and Racism

Racism is a permanent and dominant part of American society (Bell, 1992). Additionally, its permanence suggests that racism governs all aspects of the structures that govern political, economic, and social arenas including the policies, procedures, and practices in higher education (Taylor, 1999). Arguably, all aspects of a college campus,

from educational hiring practices, policies, and priorities to classroom interactions, are "steeped in machinations of American racism" (Muñoz, 2009, p. 57). Racism is deeply rooted in academic settings and when higher education ignores this systemic racism, diversity initiatives become futile and serve to perpetuate structural and institutional racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Findings presented here provide a glimpse into the racialized experiences of African American students and perhaps shed light on the ineffectiveness of current initiatives, programs, and policies.

CRT Challenges Dominant Ideology

CRT scholars find fault with three ideas advocated by the dominant ideology in society: colorblindness, neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity. On the surface these goals appear to be relevant and appropriate, but in actuality, the history of racism in this country makes it impossible to achieve them. CRT scholars argue that if we function as a colorblind society, we ignore the inequality, oppression, and inopportunity that cannot be remedied by ignoring color (Bell, 1987; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado, 1989, 2003; G. R. Lopez, 2003; Solórzano, 1997). DeCuir and Dixson (2004) explain that colorblindness allows individuals to ignore racist policies that perpetuate inequities. The absence of inclusivity in the student development theories used by student affairs professionals (Patton, McEwen, Rendon, & Howard-Hamilton, 2007) and in academic curriculums (Ladson-Billings, 1998) counters the notion that colorblindness eliminates social inequities. In order for higher education professionals to utilize the findings presented in this descriptive study, they must be aware of the role that race plays in the inequities that exist in educational settings.

CRT Recognizes the Centrality of Experiential Knowledge

CRT acknowledges that the experiential knowledge of African Americans is authentic, legitimate, and crucial to understanding and examining racial subordination. Using CRT to analyze the practices in higher education necessitates listening to the lived experiences of African Americans students through counter storytelling, which "aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths, especially ones held by the majority" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 144). Counter storytelling gives marginalized students a voice to challenge the discourse of the majority (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). While the current study is quantitative and does not provide for storytelling, it does provide a foundation upon which higher education professionals at the PWI where this study was done can begin to understand the knowledge and experiences of African American students (males in particular) and to elicit information about their feelings of inclusion and contentment in academic spaces.

CRT Embraces Interdisciplinary Perspectives

CRT seeks to analyze race and racism in higher education from a historical as well as a contemporary perspective using interdisciplinary methods (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). CRT draws from the strengths of various disciplines, epistemologies, and research approaches. "CRT epistemologies reflect a raced history and focus on the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination in recognizing the multiple knowledges of People of Color" (Yosso et al., 2001, p. 96). Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) assert that these epistemologies are steeped in a "historical legacy of resistance and survival and translate into a pursuit of social injustice

in both educational research and practice" (as cited in Yosso et al., 2001, p. 96). Yosso (2005) contends, CRT "challenges notions of 'neutral' research . . . and exposes deficit informed research that silences, ignores, and distorts epistemologies of People of Color" (p. 173). CRT allows researchers to examine African American college students and the role that the intersectionality of race, gender, and socioeconomic status plays in understanding and analyzing these students. The primarily male participants in this study experienced various forms of racial microaggressions; however, this may not be due to one isolated cause but to a wide-ranging set of circumstances such as the primary community in which they were raised or their socioeconomic status. Moreover, the convergence of race and gender is further impacted by identity development.

Commitment to Social Justice

Collectively, CRT's tenets seek to eliminate racial oppression. Integral to the utilization of CRT as a framework to examining students' experiences and postsecondary educational policies is the illumination of social justice (Smith, Yosso, & Solórzano, 2007). Consequently, critically examining and identifying components of the American educational system that are oppressive to students and families of color is crucial (Stovall, 2006). In order to develop policies, practices, and programs that seek to eliminate racial oppression on college campuses, "shareholders might be well served by engaging in conversations that challenge dominant institutional discourses and the charged assumptions that are foundational to this discourse" (Iverson, 2007, as cited in Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, & Parker, 2009, p. 60). CRT pushes us to identify racism and honor the perspectives of those who are impacted by racism. It further challenges us

to move away from viewing students of color as victims of racism and observe their resilience (O'Connor, 1997) and other capital that they bring with them upon entering college (Yosso, 2005). Germane to understanding and analyzing racialized experiences of African American students at predominantly White institutions is to focus the analysis of this study on empowering participants and higher education professionals to deal effectively with those experiences.

Derrick Bell's (1980) interest convergence theory, asserts that White people will support racial justice only to the extent that there is something in it for them. Bell (1980, 2004) further notes that gains made within the African American communities during the Civil Rights Movement should be examined with cautious optimism. He contends that these changes were "allowed" to take place because they converged with the self-interests of Whites. These changes did not disrupt the White way of life in a major way. CRT theorists assert that the majority will work toward the progress of the minority only if they can identify benefits associated with such actions (Taylor, 2006). In the higher education arena, many administrators, faculty, and staff may not readily employ strategies that would improve the academic outcomes for African American students, if they do not see the ultimate value to the overall institution (S. Harper, 2009a). Colleges and universities must comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act by maintaining nondiscriminatory practices and broadening access in order to obtain government funds, which serves Whites and minorities. However, institutional practices that exclude or ignore minorities are still in place presumably because the interests of Whites would not be served by changing them (Taylor, 2000). The CRT agenda identifies and exposes the

interest convergence and seeks to empower African American students and eliminate racial, gender, and class subordination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Freire, 1973; Solórzano et al., 2000; Taylor, 2000; Villalpando, 2003).

CRT in Higher Education

In regards to higher education, Morfin, Perez, Parker, Lynn, and Arrona (2006) assert, "CRT research in higher education has highlighted the microaggressions . . . as well as racial profiling that students of color encounter at PWIs" (as cited in Minikel-Lacocque, 2013, p. 437). CRT refutes the idea that normative frames, through which the needs of White middle-class college students are understood, are effective in examining equity issues in education for people of color (Teranishi et al., 2009). CRT not only challenges dominant paradigms and situates the educational experiences of students of color in a broader social, institutional, historical, and legal context (Delgado, 1995), it also effectively refutes the notion that students (particularly low-income minority students) do not do well in school due to individual deficiencies (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002).

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to determine to what extent African American students at a predominantly White institution experience racial microaggressions in the classroom as well as the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered. A secondary purpose is to identify if there is a relationship between microaggressive encounters and academic outcomes. The final purpose is to explore

whether racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. The questions that this research seeks to answer are as follows:

1. To what extent, if any, do African American students at PWIs experience racial microaggressions?
2. What is the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered?
3. What is the relationship between microaggression and academic outcomes (as measured by GPA)?
4. How does racial identity status moderate the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes?

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the research process in this study:

1. Participants are undergraduate students at a predominantly White institution.
2. All respondents will answer all survey questions honestly and to the best of their ability.
3. The questions and statements included on the instrument were easily understood by the participants.
4. Participants understand what microaggressions are and recognize when they encounter them.

Limitations

There are a few limitations to this study.

1. Results may not be generalizable beyond the specific population from which the sample will be drawn.
2. Since the researcher cannot have control over respondents' honesty, results might not accurately reflect the opinions of all racial and ethnic minority students.
3. The instrument used relies on participant self-report; therefore, results may not be objective.
4. The participants' level of racial identity development (e.g., Sue & Sue, 1999) may affect their perceptions of racial microaggressions.

Delimitations

The following delimitations applied:

1. A web-based survey will be used to collect data.
2. Participants will be delimited to undergraduate African American students at a southeastern PWI.
3. The survey instrument did not include open-ended response items.

Summary

For decades there has been an increasing body of research that addresses diversity in higher education as the numbers of African American students steadily increase. Despite increasing diversity, discrimination and stereotyping persists in the United States. Many African American students report feeling marginalized and invisible. Further

research reveals these students also feel as though they should deny their own identity and take on the identity and behaviors of White middle class Americans in order to fit. Moreover, studies have shown that faculty members, staff, and school administrators exhibit discriminatory behaviors towards African American students. In order to address these issues, scholars assert that institutions of higher education must be willing to take an honest look at their current practices and policies and be willing to make necessary changes. Researchers have shown that overt racism has gone through a transformation into a more subtle form of racism called *racial microaggression*. As African American students encounter racial microaggressions in the classroom of PWIs, their responses could run the gamut from confronting the behavior to withdrawing from the institution.

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which, as well as the frequency, that African American students encounter racial microaggressions at a southeastern PWI. It also explores how racial identity status moderates students' response to racial microaggression and whether or not these experiences impact academic outcomes. The results will provide insight into the ways that student affairs professionals can address the retention of African American students. Finally, this research will contribute to the growing body of research on racial microaggression.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, literature regarding the relationship between racism and racial microaggressions, racial identity, and academic outcomes is described. First, this chapter discusses racism and its various manifestations. Also, a definition of racial microaggressions and a delineation of microaggression themes and dilemmas are presented. Next, empirical and theoretical research that highlights the impact of racism and racial microaggressions on the experiences of African American college students, and specifically African American males, are examined to show their relationship to academic outcomes for African American students at PWIs. Due to the disproportionate number of male participants in this study, this chapter also highlights the influence of socioeconomic background, community of origin demographics, health, and religion on academic outcomes for African American male college students. These factors were selected because they are salient themes in current research on similar topics (J. E. Davis, 1994; Paradies, 2006; Sellers et al., 2006; Watson, 2006). Finally, racial identity development and its influence on the development of positive coping strategies for African American who encounter racism and microaggressions at PWIs are reviewed to provide support for further study.

Racism

An authority on racism, James Jones (1997) defines racism as a complex ideology displayed through the exercise of power over a racial group considered to be inferior by individuals, institutions, and societal policies and practices. According to Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder (2008), "racism devalues, demeans, and disadvantages Black Americans by treating them as lesser beings and by denying equal access and opportunity" (p. 329). President Clinton's Race Advisory Board reported that

> (a) racism is one of the most divisive forces in our society, (b) racial legacies of the past continue to haunt current policies and practices that create unfair disparities between minority and majority groups, (c) racial inequities are so deeply ingrained in American society that they are nearly invisible, and (d) most White Americans are unaware of the advantages they enjoy in this society and of how their attitudes and actions unintentionally discriminate against persons of color. (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 271)

Jones (1997) asserts that the manifestation of racism can occur on three levels: individual, institutional, and structural. *Individual racism* is overt, deliberate, and personal acts, ranging from violent hate crimes to discouraging sons or daughters from marrying outside their race, that are intended to harm or discriminate against racial minorities (Sue, 2003, 2010). *Institutional racism* resides in institutional policies, practices, as well as in governments, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, courts, businesses, schools, and churches. Some examples of institutional inequities include unfair bank lending practices, segregated neighborhoods, schools and churches, racial profiling, and discriminatory hiring or promotion practices. These structures and practices are purportedly designed to increase efficiency and maintain fairness; however,

they contribute to the oppression of marginalized groups (Sue, 2010). It includes discriminatory treatment, unfair policies, and inequitable opportunities and impacts based on race that are produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, etc.). Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they act in ways that advantage and disadvantage people, based on race. *Structural racism* is defined as the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics—historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal—that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It is a system of hierarchy and inequity, primarily characterized by white supremacy—the preferential treatment, privilege and power for White people at the expense of racially oppressed people. Structural racism is embedded in all aspects of society including history, culture, politics, and economics. It is the most pervasive form of racism and its manifestations include intentional or unintentional inequalities in power, access, opportunities, treatment, and policies. It encompasses (a) history, which lies underneath the surface, providing the foundation for white supremacy in this country; (b) culture, which exists all around our everyday lives, providing the normalization and replication of racism; and (c) interconnected institutions and policies including their key relationships and rules across society which provide the legitimacy and reinforcements to maintain and perpetuate racism (Lawrence & Keleher, 2004).

Racism in the United States is an evolving and contentious topic, which highlights the notion that race means different things to different people. From a historical perspective, oppression and racial inequities have been manifested through United States

policies, laws, institutions, and individuals (Jones, 1997). During the past two centuries social, political, and educational advances have propelled African Americans beyond racial barriers. Notably, the *Brown vs. Board of Education* court ruling of 1954 overturned the separate but equal doctrine of the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* of 1896. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensured that public facilities, schools, and places of employment were no longer legally segregated. Since then, Thurgood Marshall, in 1967, became the first African American judge to be appointed to the Supreme Court. In 1968, Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman to be elected to the United States Congress. Dr. Mae Jamison was the first African American woman to be launched into space in 1992. In the historical presidential election of 2008, Barack Obama became the first African American president of the United States. However, despite these and other remarkable accomplishments made by African Americans, racial disparities still exist in America (Bahena, 2012; Carlo, Crockett, & Carranza, 2011; Gross & Mauro, 1989; Harrell, 2000; Koppelman & Goodhart, 2011; Lin & Harris, 2009; Pickett, Chiricos, Golden, & Gertz, 2012) and thereby warrant further attention.

The most blatant and obvious forms of racism are behind us, but the color line still exists (Burnham, 2008). Additionally, there is growing commentary that suggests that we are living in a post-racial—devoid of racism, discrimination, and prejudice—America (Burnham, 2008). However, the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Acts are under constant attack, and across a myriad of contexts inequities still prevail. Those who subscribe to the notion that we live in a post-racial America seem to be unaware of the disparate forms of racism.

In his book, *The Psychology of Prejudice*, Nelson (2002) questions, "Where have all the bigots gone?" (p. 108). Open expressions of racist beliefs seemed to have disappeared (Dovidio, Gaertner, Kawakami, & Hodson, 2002; Jones, 1997; Miller & Garran, 2008; Nelson, 2002). However, many scholars observe that

> racism has not disappeared but (a) morphed into a highly disguised, invisible, and subtle form that lies outside the level of conscious awareness, (b) hides in the invisible assumptions and beliefs of individuals, and (c) is embedded in the policies and structures of our institutions. (Sue, 2010, p. 142)

A key component in understanding this "new" racism lies in the research on aversive racism theory (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1991, 1993, 1996, 2000; Dovidio, Kawakami, & Gaertner, 2002; Dovidio, Kawakami, Smoak, & Gaertner, 2009), which maintains that "individuals who believe in equality and embrace democratic ideals may continue to harbor unconscious racist attitudes and beliefs towards people of color" (Sue, 2010, p. 143). This manifests itself in *racial microaggressions*.

Racial Microaggressions

The term microaggression was coined by Chester Pierce in 1970 as subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are put downs. C. Pierce (1974) goes on to say that "one must not look for the gross and obvious. The subtle, cumulative miniassault is the substance of today's racism" (p. 516). On the surface microaggressions may appear harmless; however, collectively, over a lifetime, they can "theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence" (C. Pierce, 1995, p. 281). More recently microaggressions have been defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral and environmental

indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007, p. 72).

In their research in clinical psychology, Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2007) have delineated three types of microaggressions:

1. *Microassaults* are similar to what would be considered "old-fashioned racism" in that it is an explicit verbal or nonverbal attack meant to purposefully hurt the recipient. For example, referring to someone as the "N" word or deliberately overlooking the raised hand of a student of color and calling on a White student instead. "When perpetrators feel some degree of anonymity and are assured that their roles or actions can be concealed, they may feel freer to engage in a microassault" (p. 274).
2. *Microinsults* occur when Whites demean an individual's heritage or identity; for instance, when faculty members make comments to Black students complimenting their ability to articulate well. The implication is that, in general, African Americans are not intelligent. Microinsults are "subtle snubs" which are often "outside the conscious awareness" of the perpetrator (p. 276).
3. *Microinvalidations* are invalidations or negations of the thoughts, feelings, or reality of Black Americans. For example, statements like "I don't see color" or "we are all human beings" convey the message that the cultural experiences of people of color are invalid.

Microinsults and microinvalidations create an internal conflict between explicit and implicit messages for the recipient because they (a) foster confusion between the overt message and one's experiential reality, (b) imply perpetrators are not true friends or allies, (c) alter an important personal, social, or professional relationship with perpetrators, and (d) place targets in an unenviable position of ascertaining when, where, and how to resist oppression versus when to accommodate it (Sue, 2010; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009).

Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2007) identified nine themes of microaggressions. The first four themes evolved as subcategories from microinsults. They are as follows: (a) "Ascription of intelligence" communicates the message that people of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites (e.g., "You are a credit to your race."); (b) "Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles" communicates the message that people of color should assimilate to the dominant culture (e.g., Asking a Black person: "Why are you so loud/animated? Just calm down."); (c) "Second-class citizen" communicates the message that people of color are servants to Whites and could not possibly occupy high-status positions; (d) "Criminality/assumption of criminal status" communicates the message that persons of color are dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race (e.g., A store owner following a customer of color around a store). The following four themes emerged as subcategories of microinvalidations: (e) "Color blindness" sends the message that denies a person of color as a racial and cultural being (e.g., "When I look at you, I don't see color."); (f) "Alien in own land" conveys the message that you are a foreigner and not American (e.g., "Where were you born? You speak good English."); (g) "Denial

of individual racism" sends the message that your racial oppression is no different from my gender oppressions; I can't be racist, I am like you (e.g., "As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority."); (h) "Myth of meritocracy" conveys the message that race does not play a role in life successes (e.g., "I believe the most qualified person should get the job."); and the final theme (i) "Environmental microaggressions" send the message that people of color do not belong or don't exist (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, pp. 276–277). This theme is particularly powerful because it takes place across all three racial microaggression categories—microassaults, microinsults, and microinvalidations and manifests at systemic or environmental levels. Environmental microaggressions "refers to the numerous demeaning and threatening social, educational, political, or economic cues that are communicated individually, institutionally, or societally to marginalized groups" (Sue, 2010, p. 25). These types of microaggression may be delivered visually (C. Pierce et al., 1978) or from a stated philosophy such as colorblindness (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008). References to campus climate being invalidating or hostile are examples of environmental microaggressions. The unspoken implications of all microaggressions are that African Americans are deficient, irrelevant, and deserving of marginalized status (Constantine & Sue, 2007). Figure 1 displays Derald Sue's (2010) categorization of microaggressions.

The previous section provides a taxonomy of racial microaggressions which delineates the ways that microaggressions are delivered (verbal, behavioral, and environmental), their forms (microinsult, microassault, and microinvalidation), as well as the hidden messages they convey and examples of their manifestations (Sue, 2010). The

following section outlines the internal processes and psychological dilemmas that racial microaggressions present for the recipient as well as the perpetrator.

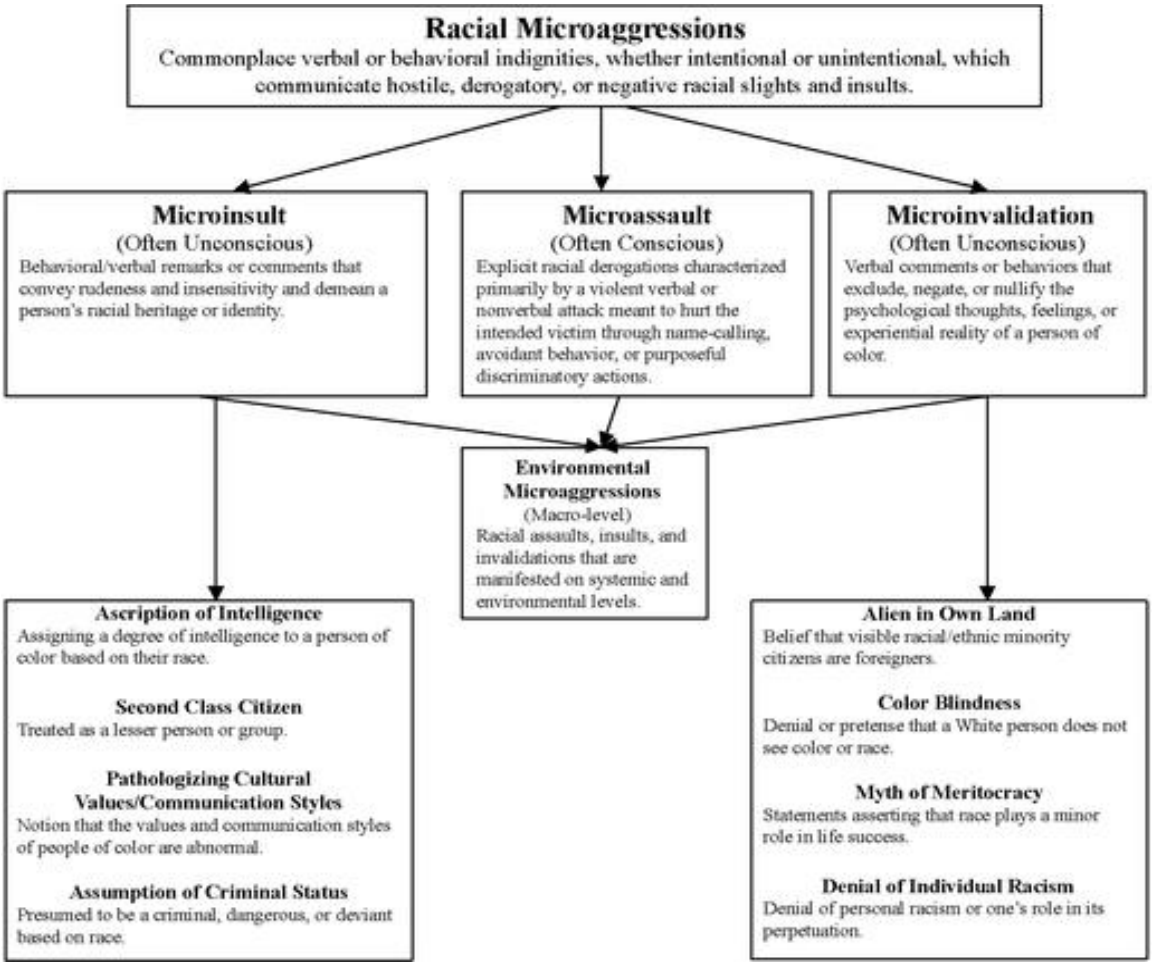

Figure 1. Categories of and relationships among Racial Microaggressions (Sue, 2010).

There is a dearth of research that traces the impact of microaggressions from beginning to end. In other words, little is known about what happens to the target internally after the microaggression. How do microaggressions affect the perpetrator or the recipient? What psychological "mechanisms are activated?" To address such questions, Sue conducted one study on African American participants (Sue, Capodilupo,

& Holder, 2008) and another study (Sue et al., 2009) on a mixed group of informants of color. The researchers identified the Microaggression Process Model—a five-phase process that shows how recipients of microaggressions are likely to perceive, interpret, and respond to microaggressions. Microaggressions set off a chain of events for the target "that may be energy-depleting, and/or disruptive to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains" (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Sue et al., 2009, as cited in Sue, 2010, p. 82). This chain of events are represented in the following five phases. *Phase One—The Microaggressive Incident:* an event or situation experienced by the victim. *Phase Two—Perception:* The victim assesses the incident and wonders if it was racially motivated. *Phase Three—Reaction*: The victim's reaction is based on thoughts, actions, or emotional response. *Phase Four—Interpretation*: The victim examines the possible meanings behind the incident and tries to assess the perpetrators intentions. *Phase Five—Consequences and Impact*: The victim decides what coping strategies to employ either ignore it or address the perpetrator.

Sue, Capodilupo, et al. (2007) assert that "microaggressions operate to create psychological dilemmas for both the White perpetrator and the person of color" (p. 277).

Clash of the Realities

The racial realities of African Americans and Whites are markedly different. African Americans view racism as a constant reality; contrarily, Whites deem racism as a thing of the past (Pew Research Center, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Racial realities are shaped by how individuals view the world. An example of how racial realities are shaped can be seen in the Trayvon Martin incident. Martin, an innocent

unarmed 17-year-old was shot and killed by George Zimmerman, a mixed-race Hispanic man who claimed to have acted in self-defense under Florida's Stand Your Ground law. One could speculate as to whether or not Zimmerman would have felt threatened if the young man were White, but the reality for the parents of young African American men is constant fear for their safety and rehearsals regarding what to do if stopped by the police. This, however, is not a reality for White parents. The lived experiences of African American and White people garner different interpretations of their racial realities.

Invisibility of Unintentional Bias

Perpetrators of racial microaggressions are often unaware of underlying racial bias due to their own social conditioning. Due to such social conditioning, many Whites unknowingly perpetrate microaggressive acts without conscious recognition of the underlying racial bias, often finding it difficult to accept the notion of the systematic privilege conferred upon them in society (Sue & Sue, 2008). Perpetrators of racial microaggressions sincerely believe that their microaggressive behaviors occur in good faith without bias. Additionally, they believe that their behaviors are born of a desire to help, not harm. How then does a person of color prove that the microaggression even occurred? If the perpetrator believes he or she was acting in good faith how do we make him or her aware of it (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder 2007)? Sue and his colleagues further maintain, "racial microaggressions become automatic because of cultural conditioning and that they may become connected neurologically with the processing of emotions that surround prejudice" (Abelson et al., 1998, as cited in Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 277).

Environmental microaggression on economic, political, and educational levels, however, are quite obvious to people of color who are negatively impacted by them. According to Peggy McIntosh (1998), "Whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'" (p. 3).

Perceived Minimal Harm of Microaggressions

While most people will not deny the harmful effects of overt racism on the psychological and physical well-being of people of color (Jones, 1997), racial microaggressions are typically views as minor offenses (C. Pierce et al., 1978; Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008). However, studies reveal that racial microaggressions (a) assail the mental health of recipients, causing anger, frustration, low self-esteem, and emotional turmoil (Brondolo et al., 2003; Crocker & Major, 1989; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008; Swim, Hyers, Cohen, & Ferguson, 2001); (b) create a hostile and invalidating campus or work climate (Rowe, 1990; Solórzano et al., 2000); (c) perpetuate stereotype threat (Cadinu, Maass, Rosabianca, & Kiesner, 2005; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002); (d) create physical health problems (Brondolo, Reippi, Erikson, et al., 2003; Brondolo, Rieppi, Kelly, & Gerin, 2003; R. Clark et al., 1999); (e) saturate the broader society with cues that signal devaluation of social group identities (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008); and (f) lower work productivity and problem solving-solving abilities (Cadinu et al., 2005; Dovidio, 2001; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007).

While it may be difficult to deny the harmful effects of overt racism on the victim (Jones, 1997), racial microaggressions are typically considered harmless and insignificant

(J. Pierce, 1988; C. Pierce et al., 1978; Sue, 2010). "Trivializing and minimizing racial microaggressions by some Whites often appear to be a defensive reaction to feeling blamed and guilty" (Sue, 2010, p. 51). The member of the dominant culture believes that the victim is "making a mountain out of a molehill," viewing minorities as oversensitive (Thomas, 2008). African American college students often feel as though they are under assault and spend a great deal of time defending themselves against microaggressive attacks which ultimately distracts them from their studies (Sue et al., 2009; Watkins, Labarrie, & Appio, 2010). Over time these microaggressive experiences create hostile college environments.

The Catch-22 of Responding to Microaggressions

When a microaggression occurs, the recipient is placed in a catch-22. The ambiguity of the microaggressive experience leads the members of marginalized populations to question the occurrence. He or she may ask:

> Did what I think just happened, happen? Was this a deliberate act or an unintentional slight? How do I respond? Sit and stew over it or confront the person? If I bring the topic up, how do I prove it? Is it really worth the effort? Should I just drop the matter? (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 279)

When African American students experience racial microaggressions in a college setting, their reactions to these experiences may include anger, confusion, or depression (Watkins et al., 2010). "Psychological energy is expended to (1) discern the truth, (2) protect oneself from insults and invalidations, and (3) try to ascertain what actions should be taken" (Sue, 2010, p. 54). This interferes with students' ability to be productive in an academic setting (Cardinu et al., 2005; Salvatore & Shelton, 2007; Steele, Spencer, &

Aronson, 2003. The perpetrator experiences feelings of anxiety and defensiveness towards being labeled a racist, which makes engaging in productive dialogue about the incident virtually impossible (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Critics of microaggressions claim that researchers are "making a mountain out of a molehill" (Schacht, 2008; Thomas, 2008) by over emphasizing its detrimental impact. One microaggression in isolation may not have an impact, but if they occur continuously over time the consequences can be detrimental. Research has shown that perceived or covert racism leads to depression (Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999), low self-esteem and low satisfaction with life (Broman, 1997), and anxiety, racial rage, and helplessness (Carter, 2007; R. Clark et al., 1999; Feagin & Sykes, 1994; Ridley, 2005; Solórzano et al., 2000; Utsey, 1999). Psychological literature reveals that microaggressions place tremendous psychological or physical demands on targets. Throughout their lives, people of color are continuously subjected to racial microaggressions from peers, neighbors, media, and educational institutions. The microaggressive messages and behaviors are so pervasive that they often go unrecognized (Sue, 2010). Although all forms of racism are harmful, the cumulative nature of microaggressions make them particularly damaging (Sue, 2010).

Racism and the College Experience of African American Students

Scholars have long tried to decipher the effects of racism on African Americans (Akbar, 1984; Fanon, 1967; Jones, 1997; Plummer & Slane, 1996; Tovar-Murray & Munley, 2007; Utsey, Bolden, & Brown, 2001). Race related stress is a daily reality for most African Americans (Carter, 2007; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

2001). The negative consequences and psychological impact of racism on African Americans have been well documented. College students deal with a myriad of stressors from homesickness to academic difficulties (Ross, Niebling, & Herkert, 1999). Additionally, African American students face race-related stress (Watkins et al., 2010). Research continues to reveal that racism impacts and shapes the experiences of college students of color (Johnson & Arbona, 2006; Utsey et al., 2002). Students of color often find it difficult to adjust to their predominantly White campuses due to the stressful effects of racism (Ancis et al., 2000; Solórzano et al., 2000).

In a longitudinal study comparing the experiences of 1,825 White, 328 African American, and 340 Chicano students attending predominantly White institutions from 1985 to 1989, Hurtado (1992) identified differences in perceptions of racial tension among institution types. For instance, students attending four-year private institutions perceived a better campus climate than those who attended four-year public institutions. On campuses that were perceived as prioritizing student-centered services, students reported low levels of racial tension. Overall, African Americans had a tendency to perceive higher racial tension on their campus.

Using data from the National Study on Student Learning, Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, and Hagedorn (1999), compared how perceived discrimination impacted 1,139 first-year White students' and 315 first-year African American students' college experience. African American students' perceptions of discrimination negatively affected their social experience, thereby causing them to feel less committed to the institution. Parental encouragement affected student's decision to persist, particularly for

African American students. This finding challenges Tinto's (1975) student development theory, which asserts that students must separate from their family and high school friends in order to successfully adjust to their college community.

Cokley (2002) examined academic achievement and self-concept of 206 African American undergraduate students attending predominantly White institutions and historically Black universities. Demographic, faculty interaction, and GPA information were collected and participants also completed the Academic Self-Acceptance Scale. Findings indicated that African American students who entered PWIs with higher GPAs exhibit lower academic self-concept than African American students who entered HBCUs with lower GPAs, suggesting that the environment at PWIs creates greater academic anxiety for African American students than that of an HBCU.

Fisher and Hartman (1995) studied a group of 120 Black and 120 White undergraduate students from Southwest Missouri State University (SMSU) to explore the social experiences of Blacks on the campus. Participants completed a questionnaire and participated in interviews. Researchers explored the frequency of racial prejudice and discrimination on campus, group solidarity among Black students as a function of social segregation, and students' ideas to improve interracial relations. The researchers found that race is more salient for Black students than for White students. They further found that Black students were reminded daily of their marginalized status by being excluded from activities and hearing spoken slurs, and as a result, often felt alienated.

Racial Microaggressions and the College Experience of African American Students

According to Hurtado (2002), institutional environments are influenced by (a) government policies, (b) campus's historical legacy of racial exclusion, (c) numerical representation of African American male students and faculty, and (d) racial behaviors inside and outside the classroom. In light of this assertion, it is imperative that we explore how campus environments can create isolation, dissatisfaction, and academic complacency for African American students. Microaggressions can occur in any setting; however, the most damaging ones are likely to occur between those with power and those who are disempowered (Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, et al., 2008). As classrooms become increasingly diverse, the occurrences of microaggressions increase as well, and unfortunately, many instructors are ill equipped to deal with students' reactions.

> It has been hypothesized that racial microaggressions often trigger difficult dialogues on race in the classroom because they are found to be offensive to students of color who directly or indirectly confront perpetrators who prefer to avoid the topic or feel falsely accused of racism (Sue & Constantine, 2007). As a result, the dialogues or interactions become emotionally charged, producing misunderstandings, conflicts, and hostility between parties (Watt, 2007). Unfortunately, teachers . . . do not recognize racial microaggressions when they occur, feel uncomfortable with race-related topics, and lack the skills needed to facilitate difficult dialogues on race (Young, 2003). (Sue et al., 2009, p. 183)

Microaggressions are present in classroom activities and educational materials (Reynolds, Sneva, & Beehler, 2010; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2009). Studies reveal that microaggressions in the classroom create a hostile and invalidating environment (Solórzano et al., 2000), lead to stereotype threat—being at risk of confirming, as self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group (Steele &

Aronson, 1995), as well as lower productivity (Salvatore & Shelton, 2007). Often, the contributions of people of color are neglected in curriculums; as a result, White students are affirmed and African American students "feel their identities are constantly assailed in the classroom. Black students are likely to expend considerable emotional energy protecting their own integrity while at the same time being distracted from fully engaging in the learning process" (Sue, 2010, p. 10). Another example of microaggression occurs when White faculty characterize Black communication as abnormal by indicating that African American students are becoming too emotional (Constantine & Sue, 2007; Sue, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2008). The invisibility of microaggressions can create confusion and disillusionment because the intent is not always clear (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Furthermore, it produces "psychological dilemmas that unless adequately resolved can lead to increased levels of racial anger, mistrust, and loss of self-esteem for persons of color" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 275). Due to the covert and unconscious nature of microaggressions they are often dismissed by the perpetrator as being insignificant; however, for African Americans, the cumulative nature of these seemingly insignificant acts can have deleterious effects and create feelings of marginalization (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

Solórzano et al. (2000) have explored how African American students experience and respond to racial microaggressions on college campuses. The researchers further explored the link between racial stereotypes, cumulative racial microaggressions, campus racial climate, and academic performance. In this qualitative study the researchers used a critical race framework to study how micro-level forms of racism affect the structures,

processes, and discourse of a college racial climate. They asserted that a positive collegiate racial climate can lead to positive academic outcomes, and contrarily, a negative collegiate racial climate is associated with poor academic performance. Details collected from focus groups revealed that African American students faced verbal and nonverbal microaggressions in academic spaces of PWIs. Students reported feeling invisible and inadequate. After receiving a 95 on a math quiz, one student was accused of cheating. This is an example of the ongoing negative interactions with faculty that instilled feelings of self-doubt in students. This research further revealed that, due to the strain and anxiety caused by these assaults—or what William Smith (2004) termed "racial battle fatigue" (p. 171), many African American students dropped classes, changed majors, or left college (Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009). Although this study points out the frustrating experiences of African American students who encounter microaggressions on campus, it does not address how these students handle these experiences. Furthermore, although this research provides insight into the impact of racial microaggression on campus climate and gives voice to the African Americans who experience these microaggressions, it does not provide a robust exploration of how these students use their racial identity to moderate their experiences with microaggressions and the ultimate impact on academic outcomes. The present study seeks to discover what the students who do not drop classes, change majors, or leave college do. Why are they able to endure these racial affronts?

When faced with racism in the college classroom, overt or subtle, some African American students navigate through these assaults upon their race by calling upon the

cultural skills they obtained from growing up Black in America. Unfortunately, little research has been done to explore the impact that racism has on collegiate interactions (Yosso et al., 2009). A longitudinal study explored race-related stress experienced by high achieving Latino students and the various ways they coped with stress during their freshman year at a private PWI (D. J. Lopez, 2005). This finding revealed that participants' experiences with racism led to a decrease in academic integration. Moreover, students became less assimilated over time; however, the attributes of being a high achiever helped them to endure the hostile environment to get their academic needs met. These findings suggest that personal attributes can moderate the impact of racism on African American students. One limitation of this study is that its participants were high achievers attending a highly selective private institution; these findings might not hold true for a broader range of students at a different type of institution.

Microaggressions and the African American Male College Students

Due to the disproportionately high response rate of males in the current study (N = 44), it is necessary to examine microaggression and its effects on African American males in academic settings. Moreover, since the primary analysis which sought to identify a relationship between microaggressive experiences and academic outcomes did not yield significant results, a secondary analysis was done based on demographic themes which are salient for African American males in current research: demographics of community of origin, high-school demographics, socioeconomic status, and religion (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2010; J. E. Davis, 1994; Paradies, 2006; Sellers et al., 2006). Current literature is saturated with the experiences of African American males in

education (Davis, 2003; Jackson & Moore, 2008; Noguera, 2003; Strayhorn, 2008). Additionally, research shows that racial microaggressions affect the experiences and outcomes for African American males differently than other groups (Smith, Hung, & Franklin, 2011; Sue, 2010; Walpole, 2007).

African American males' experiences with racial microaggression are evident in high school. Quaylan Allen (2012) conducted a qualitative study to examine the educational experiences of Black middle-class high school males through the counterstories of Black students and their fathers. The study illuminates microaggressive events experienced by participants and the cultural wealth their fathers utilized to divert negative outcomes. Teachers perceived Black boys to be to be "unintelligent" and "deviant" labels that Sue (2010) would describe as Ascription of Intelligence and Assumptions of Criminality. Assumptions of intelligence and deviance and differential treatment in regards to discipline demonstrates "how race functions as a social stratifying structure, exists as a barrier to social mobility for Black people, and stigmatizes Black male identity" (Allen, 2012, p. 186). Allen asserts, "when Black male students are stereotyped by their teachers, racially profiled by administrators and experiencing racially differentiated discipline, they engage in conflict with White institutional hegemony and a racially stratifying system" (p. 186). Given African American males' experiences with racial microaggression in high school, it would be safe to assume that these young men enter college with a keen perspective of these microaggressive experiences.

Racial microaggressions are a source of stress for African American male college students. A study conducted by Smith et al. (2011) examined the role that racial

microaggressions, societal problems, and educational attainment have in predicting mundane, extreme, environmental stress (MEES) in African American males. A total of 2,864 adults, which included 1,328 Black men (400 of them were ages 18 through 29), 500 Black women, and 1,029 participants from other racial groups, participated in telephone interviews conducted by the International Communications Research from African American Men Survey (2006) in collaborations with *The Washington Post*, Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University. Findings indicate that "racial microaggressions significantly increase MEES for African American males as they move up the educational pipeline" (p. 75), which makes it a particularly salient issue for them. Other findings demonstrate that for college students, racial microaggressions and societal problems contribute to 40% of mundane stress. For African American male college students, racial microaggression is a source of stress.

A qualitative study examining the experiences of 36 Black males at Harvard University, Michigan State University, University of California at Berkley, University of Illinois, and the University of Michigan was conducted by Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007). These researchers utilized a race-gendered analysis, which allowed them "to consider the nuances of institutional and societal ideologies, behaviors, and experiences—singly and in combination" (Smith, Allen, et al., 2007, p. 572). Focus group interviews revealed two themes: (a) anti-Black male stereotypes and marginality, which lead to (b) extreme surveillance and control. The primary domains where racial microaggression occurred were campus-academic, campus-social, and campus-public spaces. The goal and outcome of the study was to "identify specific domains and

common occurrences of racial microaggressions that produce racial battle fatigue in its psychological form. In the process, [the researchers] introduced a racial construct, *Black misandry,* that describes how other groups position, conceptualize, define, and redefine Black males as subordinate, inferior, and/or criminal (Blumer, 1958; Smith, 2005b)" (as cited in Smith, Allen, et al., 2007, p. 573). Ultimately, this study highlights the contention that higher education environments are more hostile towards African American males than other groups.

Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement for African American Males

While individual motivation does play a role in academic achievement for minority students and African American males in particular (Ogbu & Davis, 2003), economic resources also play a significant role in academic outcomes for African American male college students. There is an overrepresentation of African Americans in the lowest socioeconomic levels despite the increase of the African American middle class (Lareau, 2003). Moreover, research continuously shows that high socioeconomic status is positively related to academic outcomes for African Americans (Dynarski, 2002; Marable, 2003; Perna & Titus, 2004). In a study that highlights the "trends in the characteristics, aspirations, and values of African American male freshman" (Griffin, Jayakumar, Jones, & Allen, 2010, p. 233) who have entered college over the past 30 years, researchers utilized the Integrated Model of Student Success to identify the primary characteristics, skills, abilities, and experiences of college-going Black males. In alignment with previous research, study findings indicated that Black males are more likely to attend college if they are from affluent families. Also, the study revealed that

Black males who persisted in college were more likely to have high confidence in their academic abilities.

Strayhorn (2009) conducted a quantitative national study to identify the aspirations of Black males in urban, suburban, and rural high schools. Data was drawn from the National Education Longitudinal Study. A sample of eighth graders who were tracked for 12 years was utilized in this study. Hierarchical Linear Regressions analysis revealed that socioeconomic status (SES) was significantly related to the educational aspirations of Black males. Low SES participants reported lower educational aspirations than those of high SES participants. The researcher speculated that high SES students had more exposure to information about college and graduate school than low SES participants.

Religious Participation and African American College Experience

Research focused on spirituality and African American students have been consistent, finding a positive correlation between spirituality and many variables including academic success (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Bryant, Choi, & Yasumo, 2003; Riggins, McNeal, & Herdnon, 2008; Stewart, 2008). In a quantitative study conducted by Walker and Dixon (2002) to examine the relationship between spirituality and religious participation and academic outcomes, researchers administered a questionnaire to 192 (109 European Americans, and 83 African American) college students. Findings suggested that not only do African Americans have higher levels of spiritual beliefs and religious participation than European Americans, but also, spiritual beliefs and religious participation was positively correlated with academic outcomes.

Additionally, spiritual beliefs and religious participation were salient for African American students and religious participation alone was salient for European Americans.

In order to determine whether or not there were difference in spirituality for African American students attending HBCUs and those attending PWIs, Weddle-West, Hagan, and Norwood (2013) administered the Armstrong Measure of Spirituality (AMOS) survey to 125 African American college students (58 at an HBCU, 23 of which were male and 35 were female; 67 at a PWI, 28 of whom were males and 39 were females). According to the findings, African American students attending PWIs reported higher levels of spirituality than those African American students attending HBCUs. It appears that providing opportunities for fostering spirituality for African American male students would positively impact their college experience.

Significance of Racial Identity

As discussed above, a careful review of the extant literature reveals that little research has been conducted to address specifically how microaggressions affect African American students in the classroom at PWIs. Furthermore, a plethora of research reveals that prejudice and racial discrimination in the classroom at PWIs can negatively impact academic outcomes (Boyer & Davis, 2013; Chavous, 2000; Fleming, 1984; Hurtado, 1992; Quaye, 2012; Smedley, Myers, & Harrel, 1993; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1998; Tinto, 1993); however, there is an absence of research that addresses how the racial identities of African American students are related to their response to microaggressions in the classroom and the impact this has on academic outcomes.

Initial research on Black racial identity suggested that internalized racism manifests itself as self-hatred in Black children (K. B. Clark & Clark, 1939). According to Porter and Washington (1979), until the 1970s empirical research substantiated the self-hatred hypothesis. However, along with Black Power Movement in the 1970s came opposition to the self-hatred thesis, as Blacks sought to redefine what it meant to be Black and cultivate racial pride (Cole & Stewart, 1996). This led Blacks to see themselves in a more positive light than previously suggested in racial identity literature and to a reconceptualization of racial identity (B. Harper & Tuckman, 2006).

The psychosocial theories of Chickering and Reisser (1993) and Erikson (1968) have established the canon of identity; however, their theories do not deal with the salience of cultural or racial identity for African American students (Cokley, 1999). One of the most prevalent models of racial identity development has been Cross's (1971) Black Racial Identity Development Model. The initial stages of this model originally consisted of five stages. *Pre-encounter*—during this stage, the individual has a neutral view of race or a pro White anti-Black perspective. This subcategory consist of variables concerning the extent to which individuals affiliate with the dominant White American culture, maintain color-blind perspectives, and/or embrace negative stereotypes of Black culture or people. *Encounter*—this subcategory includes variables relevant to what extent individuals begin to question dominant White American ideology regarding race and embrace Black culture. Typically, a racially-motivated occurrence prompts an individual to rethink his or her current identity. *Immersion-Emersion*—the variables of this subcategory address the extent to which individuals are engrossed in the process of

immersion or emersion. During immersion, the individual romanticizes and idealizes Black culture and may go as far as disparaging White people and White culture. During emersion, the individual recognizes the irrationality of his or her behavior and begins to emerge into a more critical analysis of Black culture. *Internalization/Multiculturalist*—this subscale includes variables affiliated with a balanced, less hostile perspective where individuals recognize that racial discrimination and injustice are realities that must be challenged while at the same time developing an appreciation for their own identity and embracing the identity and cultural views of others. Finally, *Commitment*—in this stage, identity translates into action on behalf of oppressed groups to help them develop their identities (Cross, 1971).

This model has had tremendous appeal; however, one persistent criticism has been that the model assumes that African Americans experience the pre-encounter stage because of feelings of self-hatred (Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Critics have asserted that many African Americans have been socialized with positive views of their racial membership (Neville, Tynes, & Utsey, 2009). Another criticism is that Cross (1971) "starts from the premise that before [African Americans] experience identity, they are first unaware of their race and the race of others" (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999, p. 41). Recognizing the validity of these criticisms, and in order to develop an instrument to effectively measure racial identity, Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, and Worrell (2001) have modified Cross's Racial Identity Model by shifting it away from the self-hatred paradigm and adding multiple identity clusters at each stage. The original five stages have been updated to four. The names in the stages

no longer represent identities but the overarching theme of the stage. Pre-Encounter entails treating race as insignificant. There are three dimensions to this stage: *Pre-encounter Assimilated*—individual accepts everything about the dominant White culture; *Pre-encounter Miseducated*—individual believes all the negative stereotypes about African Americans; *Pre-encounter Self-Hatred*—individual believes that being African American is a deficit and is responsible for negative experiences. Originally, Cross (1971) made the assumption that anyone in the Pre-encounter stage would experience self-hatred, but he now asserts that race salience impacts self-concept more than racial identity attitudes alone (Cross, 1991). The Immersion-Emmersion attitudes now has two categories—*Intense Black Involvement*, which is characterized by an over-romanticized immersion into the Black experience, and *Anti-White*, which is marked by a rejection and demonization of everything White. Finally, the Internalization phase is divided into *Internalization Afrocentricity*—individuals develop a long term commitment to their racial group to the exclusion to all others, and *Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive*—individual incorporates his or her own identity with the acceptance of other identities and cultures (Vandiver et al., 2001).

Racism is a "fundamental principle of . . . identity formation" (Omi & Winant, as cited in McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis, & Dolby, 2005, p. 5). American society is so racialized that not having a racial identity would be tantamount to not having an identity at all (McCarthy et al., 2005). Numerous ethnic groups experience discrimination and oppression in the United States; however, the oppression of African Americans is unique. From being forcefully brought to this country during the Middle Passage and considered

property for more than a century, to being systematically denied access to African culture, and denied basic human rights through laws, the African American experience is distinctive (Sellers et al., 1998) and has a profound impact on the development of racial identity.

Research (Cross, 1991; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Parham & Helms, 1985; J. Phinney, 1992; Sellers et al., 1998) has shown that race is an integral part of African American students' identity and healthy racial identity is essential to the development of African American students (Chavez & Guido-DiBrito, 1999; Cross, 1991; B. Harper & Tuckman, 2006). Chavous et al. (2003) examined the relationship between racial identity and academic outcomes for 606 African American adolescent students. The study revealed that a positive racial identity contributes to an overall feeling of confidence in one's abilities and as a result can lead to positive academic outcomes. Another study conducted by Bonvillain and Honora (2004) explored the extent to which racial identity could predict academic outcomes. Participants included 175 African American adolescents in two urban schools. Findings partially sustained that racial identity and self-esteem are predictors of academic performance.

The transition from high school to college can be a difficult one for *all* students regardless of race, especially for students who are ill-prepared to handle the many challenges they will encounter. There are several academic and social changes that students face, and many of them are not prepared to deal with these changes effectively. Among other things, students need to be able to handle time management, deal with increased personal responsibility, navigate through more rigorous course work, adapt to

more diverse settings, become more independent , manage emotions, make plans for the future, and fit in (Terenzini et al., 1996). Psychosocial theories related to student's experiences in college suggest that for African American students, this transition is even more difficult due to conflicts between the cultural values of these students and the cultural values of the PWI environment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Add to this mix microaggression in the classroom and a weak identification with one's racial group, Cross (1991), J. Phinney (1996), and Terenzini and Pascarella (1998) theorize that issues of isolation, low levels of self-efficacy, and racial hostility are sure to follow. Conversely, Sellers and Shelton's (2003) longitudinal study of 267 African American first-year college students examined the role that racial identity played in perceived racial discrimination and found that students who have a strong identification with their racial group are able to buffer these negative outcomes.

The Role of Racial Identity in Resilience

Exposure to microaggressions can have deleterious effects on individuals; these encounters may be experienced at varying degrees among African Americans. Research has shown that higher levels of racial centrality can be protective against consequences of racial discrimination and distress (Neblett, Shelton, & Sellers, 2004). Central to the need to examine the effects of microaggressions experienced by African American students in classrooms at PWIs is their potential to impair students' sense of self and impact self-efficacy and persistence. According to Bean and Eaton's (2000) retention theory, past experiences, personality, abilities, and family support affect students' academic and social integration into the college environment. The foundation of the model is built on

the psychological processes of self-efficacy theory—believing that one is capable of accomplishing what they set out to accomplish; coping behavioral theory—being able to acclimate to a new environment; and attribution theory—individual's belief that outcomes are determined by skill and abilities or that outcomes are controlled by external forces. Positive self-efficacy leads to increased persistence with a particular task as well as increased achievement. Also, it leads to higher goals for task achievement as well as persistence, which lead to social and academic integration. The psychological response of having social and academic integration gives students the sense that this institution is a good match. Bean and Eaton's (2000) retention theory fails to consider the role that racial identity plays in the retention of African American student's attending PWIs. Rodgers and Summers (2008) suggest that due to the unique cultural experiences of African American students, the retention process for those students should be looked at differently than majority student populations. The growing number of racial and ethnic groups on college campuses presents student affairs professionals with the challenge of effectively serving these students. Traditional student development theories, which have been utilized by student affairs professionals, are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of a heterogeneous student population (Cross, 1995b; Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010; Helms, 1990). As such, a deeper understanding of the role that racial identity plays in how African American students in classrooms of predominantly White campuses handle microaggressions will enable student affairs practitioners to meet the specific and unique needs of this student population.

Research literature reveals that there is a connection between racial identity and resilience. In a five-year ethnographic study, from 1997 to 2002, of Chicano/Mexican high school students in Colorado, Salazar and Franquiz (2004) set out to explore the various ways students responded to their teacher's pedagogy and utilized the information to create a model for academic resiliency, which showed that respect, mutual trust, verbal teachings, and exemplary models fostered student resiliency. One conclusion that can be drawn from this study is strengthening cultural awareness and identity could lead to better resilience for students. Gordon (1995) studied 138 African American high school sophomores from stressful and low socioeconomic backgrounds. The research, which focused on academic resiliency, revealed that, although resilient African American students had a healthy self-concept, non-resilient African-American students did not. Further, a healthy self-concept served as a buffer during stressful times and led to academic achievement. Research literature also revealed a connection between racial identity and achievement. In a multigenerational study of Black families, Bowman and Howard (1985) examined whether or not Black parents convey messages that prepare children for a racial environment. The researchers found that when parents spoke openly about racial pride as well as racial barriers with their children, higher self-efficacy and grades resulted. MacIntosh and Miller (1999) conducted an exploratory study to examine resilience and protective factors of 131 African-American adolescents as it relates to resilience. The research revealed that there was a connection between a well-developed racial identity and higher educational involvement of at-risk African American students. A study conducted by C. Davis, Aronson, and Salinas (2006) examined how 98 African

American students at two public PWIs use racial identity as a mediator of academic performance in stereotype threat situations. Students were randomly assigned to one of three stereotype threatening situations: low threat, medium threat, or high threat. Students performed significantly better in low threat conditions, and when there was a high threat condition, students' performance was adversely affected. Even when students had a strong racial identity, it did not improve performance in high threat conditions. This study revealed that promoting positive racial identity development is imperative, at least in low threat situations. Eccles, Wong, and Peck (2006) conducted a longitudinal study to explain the interactions between racism, identity, and achievement. This study of African American adolescents revealed that, when students had a strong racial identity, the extent of the connection between a microaggressive experience and academic achievement decreased.

All of these studies reveal the role that racial identity plays in protecting the target. My assumption is that racial identity plays an important role in how African American students process and respond to microaggressions in the classroom and those African American students who utilize their racial identity as a filter or buffer for microaggressions will have better academic experiences in the classroom at PWIs.

Summary

Microaggressions can have a detrimental effect on African Americans. This particular type of racism is particularly insidious due to its covert nature. The stress of enduring microaggressions over time can lead to high levels of stress and low levels of achievement among its targets. For some, however, racial identity can serve as a

protective buffer to soften the severity of the impact of a microaggressive experience. The research literature on microaggressions is focused primarily on microaggression in the workplace and in the counseling profession. Furthermore, some research literature addresses microaggression on college campuses but there is a lack of substantial research that examines how African American students utilize racial identity to serve as a buffer when they face microaggressive experiences in the classroom of PWIs. Since the participants in this study are primarily male, literature highlighting the trends and experiences of African American male college students was reviewed. This study is centered on highlighting whether or not students' racial identity affects how they handle microaggressions, specifically in the classroom, and how academic achievement is impacted. Also, this study will seek to identify tools used by students with high levels of racial identity to combat microaggressions in order to provide student affairs professionals with a foundation upon which to redress current programming.

The experiences of African American students at PWIs have been the focus of a myriad of research studies primarily emphasizing their academic struggles and revealing that these students experience lower grade point averages, higher attrition rates, and less persistence than their White counterparts (W. R. Allen, 1988; Fleming, 1984; Nettles, Thoeny, & Gosman, 1986; Tinto, 1993). Other research findings further reveal that a lack of campus role models, feelings of isolation and helplessness, and weak academic preparation leave these students feeling like outsiders in the college environment (Thile & Mott, 1995; Tinto, 1993). Recent research on microaggressions has been primarily focused on its insidious nature (Carter, 2007; R. Clark et al., 1999; Feagin & Sykes,

1994; Ridley, 2005; Solórzano et al., 2000; Utsey, 1999), but there is limited research on the internal processes and the coping strategies that victims utilize. Furthermore, research that has examined microaggressions on campus and in the classroom revealed the outward manifestations of microaggressions, such as academic outcomes, changing majors, or dropping out of college. The goal of this research is not only to determine the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes but also to determine whether or not racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. Exploring the connection between microaggressions and racial identity can contribute to reassessment of current student development models. Moreover, this research focus is necessary, as previous models of how students adjust to college life, like Tinto's (1993) three stages of passage (separation, transition, and incorporation), for example, do not address the experiences of African American students with microaggressions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine how frequently African American students at a PWI encounter racial microaggressions in the classroom, the frequency with which various types of racial microaggressions are encountered and the relationship between racial microaggression and academic outcomes (as measured by GPA). An additional objective was to determine whether or not racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. The results of this study will provide valuable insights for policy and practice in higher education. More specifically, the findings may assist institutions of higher education develop programs and services that may help retain African American students on their campuses as well as improve academic outcomes for these students.

Participants

The participants in this study were African American (N = 47) undergraduate male and female students enrolled at a large (18,500 students) predominantly White, public, coeducational, residential university located in the southeastern United States. Forty-seven students completed more than 75% of the survey in this study, although only 38 were included in *all* analyses because they completed all measures. Additionally, 35 participants reported their GPA. Participant involvement was voluntary.

Instrumentation

Three measures were used within this research study: (a) a Demographic Questionnaire, (b) the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011), and (c) the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Cross, 1991).

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was created to obtain participants' general background information including, gender, academic year, ethnic background, religious affiliation, racial composition of high school and community in which participant was raised, and socioeconomic status of participant's family.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale

The Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011) was used to measure respondents' experience of perceived microaggressions. Nadal along with other researchers developed the scale based on theoretical constructs from a number of qualitative studies (Nadal, 2011). The REMS is a 45-item scale designed to measure how many times individuals experienced microaggressions within the past six months. Respondents use a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*I did not experience this event*) to 5 (*I experienced this event 10 or more times*). The REMS comprises six subscales: (a) assumptions of inferiority (8 items; an example of an item from this subscale states "someone assumed I would not be intelligent because of my race"); (b) second-class citizen and assumptions of criminality (7 items; for example, "someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race"); (c) micro invalidations (9 items; an example of an item from this subscale includes "someone told me that people should not think about

race anymore"); (d) exoticization and assumptions of similarity (9 items; an item from this subscale states "someone told me that all the people in my racial group were the same"); (e) environmental microaggressions (7 items; for instance, "I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group"); and (f) workplace and school microaggressions (7 items; an example of an item from this subscale is "my opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race"). A total score is also obtained for the whole scale by: (a) converting items 12, 18, 19, 24, 28, 37, and 41 into inverse scores (e.g., if "5" is marked, convert to "1"; if "4" is marked, convert to "2," etc.); (b) adding ALL scores for all 45 items for the total score (including the converted scores); and (c) dividing the total score by 45 to obtain the scale score. In order to contextualize participant experiences in the classroom instead of the workplace, the researcher, with permission from the author, modified the following item: "An employer or co-worker was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race" was reworded to "An [*instructor or classmate*] was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race." The REMS subscales are comprised of categories that originated from previous microaggression research (Sue, Capodilupo, Holder, 2008; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, Torino, 2008). Table 1 delineates the subscales and their definitions.

Reliability describes the consistency of a measure. A measure has high reliability if similar results are obtained repeatedly (Creswell, 2003). Reliability is estimated using Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency. Nadal (2011) conducted a pilot study of 506 racially diverse adults and developed the following psychometric properties for each subscale: Assumptions of Inferiority (α = .896), Second-class Citizen and

Assumptions of Criminality (α = .882), Microinvalidations (α = .888), Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity (α = .849), Environmental Microaggressions (α = .850), and Workplace and School Microaggressions (α = .854). The alpha for the total REMS was .92.

Table 1

REMS Subscales Definitions

Subscale	**Definition**
Assumptions of Inferiority (AOI)	Assumption that a person of color is less competent
Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity (EAS)	Person of color is expected to speak for his/her entire race
Environmental Microaggressions (EM)	Demeaning and derogatory educational, social, political or economic messages communicated individually, societally, or institutionally to marginalized people
Workplace and School Microaggressions (WSM)	Being ignored or overlooked because of race; Assumption that the work of a person of color would be inferior.
Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality (SCCAC)	Person of color is presumed to be deviant solely based on race
Microinvalidations (MI)	Communications that exclude or negate the thoughts, feelings, or experiences of a person of color

Validity refers to whether or not meaningful inferences about a population can be drawn from the scores on an instrument (Creswell, 2003). The validity for the REMS was sound and closely correlated with both the Racism and Life Experience Scale-Brief Version (RaLES-B) a measure of experiences with prejudicial treatment and racial discrimination that is frequently used to measure racism and discrimination (Nadal, 2011). A copy of the REMS is included in Appendix A. See Appendix B for an email confirming permission from Dr. Kevin Nadal for the use of the REMS in this research.

The Cross Racial Identity Scale

The Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS; Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) was used to measure six Black racial identities of the expanded Nigrescence Model Expanded (NT-E; Cross & Vandiver, 2001). The CRIS consists of 40 items to which participants respond on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree.* There are six subscales each consisting of five items including three Pre-Encounter attitudes—Assimilation (sample items include "I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am American."), Miseducation (a sample item for this attitude is "Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work"), and Self-Hatred (a sample item includes "Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black"); one Immersion-Emersion attitude—Anti-White (a sample item is "I have strong feelings of hatred and disdain for all White people"), and two Internalization attitudes—Afrocentric (an example of an internalization Afrocentric item states "I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective") and Multiculturalist Inclusive (sample items include "I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a

multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone"). There are ten filler items that serve to minimize bias. A total score is obtained by taking the sum of the raw score on component items, which is divided by the number of items (5) on the subscale to obtain a sub-score ranging between 1 and 7.

Using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, Vandiver et al. (2002) examined the structural validity for CRIS with college samples and reported the structural validity evidence as consistent with NT-E for CRIS scores. Simmons, Worrell, and Berry (2008) examined the internal consistency and structural validity of the CRIS and reported that CRIS scores matched the theoretical framework proposed in Cross and Vandiver's (2001) expanded Nigrescence model. Simmons et al. (2008) assert that their study "provides strong support for the CRIS as an instrument for assessing Black racial identity attitudes" (p. 274). The alpha estimates for the CRIS subscales ranged from .70 to .89. A copy of the CRIS is included in Appendix C. See Appendix D for an email confirming permission from Dr. Vandiver for the use of the CRIS in this research.

Procedures

Before collecting data, permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board to conduct this study. Participants were recruited primarily via email through various student organizations, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the African American Studies department at the single institution where the study took place. Student Organizations included: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students, Neo-Black Society, Black Business Student Association, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha

Fraternity, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, and Sigma Gamma Pho Sorority. An email was sent to the organization's liaisons notifying them about the study and its purpose (see Appendix E). An email was then sent to potential participants informing them about the study and its purpose, as well as requesting their participation (see Appendix F). Subsequent follow-up emails were sent twice, reminding potential respondents about the survey. A web link to Qualtrics, a research software system, was emailed to the participants along with consent to participate in the study (see Appendix G for Consent to Act as a Human Participant). Respondents clicked yes or no to consent electronically. Each respondent was restricted to completing the survey only once. This ensured the integrity of the data. The identities of the participants were kept anonymous to the extent possible. The researcher also obtained permission to attend a gathering in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, where laptops were set up for students to complete the survey online. Participants were given an incentive to win one of five Target gift cards valued at $5.00.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the statistical program Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17.0). The completion rate was low. Out of the 108 students who started the survey only 47 participants completed at least 75% of it and 35 participants completed all measures, and 35 participants reported GPA. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize information obtained from respondents and included frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was

used to examine the relationship between racial microaggression and academic outcomes. The researcher intended to use Multivariate Regressions to examine the moderator effect of racial identity; however, this analysis was not run due to weak correlations between racial microaggression and academic outcomes.

Research Questions

For the first research question, "To what extent do African American students at PWIs experience racial microaggression?" descriptive summary statistics were obtained to determine the mean and standard deviation for all REMS subscales. A 5-point Likert type scale measured the occurrence of each item. The means reported experiences as perceived by students.

The second research question, "What is the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered?" was addressed using descriptive summary statistics to determine the frequency of each type of microaggression as identified on the REMS subscales. A five-point Likert type scale measured the occurrence of each item. The means reported experiences as perceived by students.

In order to address the third research question, "What is the relationship between microaggression and academic outcomes?" the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, *r*, was used to measure the association between the independent variable (microaggression) and dependent variable (academic outcomes as measured by GPA).

The fourth research question was "How does racial identity status moderate the relationship between microaggression and academic outcome?" Since there was no significant relationship between microaggression and GPA, there was no reason to add

another variable. Refer to Table 2 for a summary of research questions, sources of data and methods of analysis.

Table 2

Summary of Research Questions, Sources of Data, and Methods of Analysis

Research Questions	**Sources of Data**	**Methods of Analysis**
To what extent, if any, do African American students at PWIs experience racial microaggressions?	Demographic Questionnaire; REMS subscale scores	Descriptive Statistics
What is the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered?	REMS subscale scores	Descriptive Statistics
What is the relationship between microaggression and academic outcomes (as measured by GPA)?	REMS; GPA	Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient;
How does racial identity status moderate the relationship between microaggression and academic outcome?	CRIS; REMS	Multivariate Regressions [not performed due to weak correlations found in Question 3]

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent African American students at a predominantly White institution experience racial microaggressions in the classroom as well as the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered. Another purpose was to identify if there is a relationship between microaggressive encounters and academic outcomes. The final purpose was to explore whether racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. As a result of insignificant results, as well as predominantly male participants, secondary analyses were conducted based on demographic variables, which are salient for African American male college students. In this chapter, the results of the statistical analyses are presented and will include a description of the sample, descriptive statistics, an analysis of variance, correlations, and secondary analyses.

Utilizing Qualtrics research software, 108 participants started the survey; however, a total of 47 students completed more than 75% of the survey in this study and only 35 were included in all analyses because they completed all measures. Of the 47 participants 44 (94%) were male and three (6%) were female. This difference is not reflective of the institution where this study was conducted. University data reveal that 65% of undergraduate students enrolled there are female and 34% are male. There are a

total of 3,650 African American students. Of those students, 72% are female and 28% are male (UNCG, 2012). This large difference in gender was due to a large response to an email sent to an all-male listserv. Consequently, findings of this study do *not* reflect the experiences of African American students, both male and female, at the PWI where this study was conducted, which was the sample this study was intended to describe. All of the respondents identified as African American. Of the participants, 46 identified as undergraduate students and 1 as a graduate student. The mean reported GPA for the total sample was 3.02, with a range from 2.86 to 3.20. Only 35 participants reported GPA, one of which was a graduate student. The GPA for the graduate student was not included in the study. Detailed information about the participants is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentiles of Sample Population Demographics

Variables	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	44	94
Female	3	6
Academic Level*		
Undergraduate	45	98
Graduate	1	2
High School Demographics*		
Mostly Black	20	44
Mixed	15	32
Mostly White	11	24

Table 3

(Cont.)

Variables	*n*	%
Community Demographics		
Rural	6	13
Urban	18	38
Suburban	23	49
Community Racial Demographics		
Mostly Black	21	45
Mixed	18	38
Mostly White	8	17
Family Socioeconomic Status		
Poor	4	9
Working Class	21	45
Middle Class	20	43
Upper Class	2	4
Physical Health		
Poor	1	2
Fair	12	26
Good	19	40
Very Good	15	32
Attend Religious Services		
Seldom	10	21
Occasionally	18	38
Often	19	40

*Missing Data

Preliminary Analyses

The reliability estimates for the CRIS have been reported in several studies. Vandiver et al. (2002) reported Cronbach's alpha reliability range from 0.70 to 0.89 for a

sample of 309 college students. Other college samples (Cokley, 2002; Helm, 2002; White, 2002; Wright, 2003) have reported estimates ranging from .71 to .91. These values represent sufficient reliability for use in the study. For the current study the alpha reliability range for the CRIS was .71 to .90. The Cronbach's alphas for this study were consistent with the values in Nadal's (2011) research. The alpha for the overall REMS for the current study was .950, and Nadal reported an overall alpha value of .912.

Extent to Which Participants Experience Microaggressions

The first research question was "To what extent do African American students at PWIs experience racial microaggression?" Descriptive statistics revealed the mean and standard deviation of respondents who reported experiencing each of the six forms of racial microaggressions measured by the REMS in the previous six months. The REMS, a five-point Likert type scale measured from 1 = *did not experience* to 5 = *experienced 10 or more times*, identifies the occurrence of each item during the last six months. In regards to Assumptions of Inferiority (AOI) 75.4% of participants reported experiencing it, whereas 25.6% of the participants did not. Second Class Citizenship and Assumptions of Criminality (SCCACS), Microinvalidations (MI), and Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity (EAS) were experienced by 79.5% of the participants, while 20.5% did not. Workplace and School Microaggressions (WSM) were experienced by 53.8% of the participants 46.2% did not experience it at all. Finally, in sharp contrast to the other subscales, 97.4% of the participants experienced Environmental Microaggressions (EM) and 2.6% did not. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Percentage of Participants Who Perceived Microaggressive Experiences over the Past Six Months

Variables	Percent
Assumptions of Inferiority	75.4%
Second Class Citizen and Assumption of Criminal Status	79.5%
Microinvalidations	79.5%
Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity	79.5%
Environmental Microaggression	97.4%
Workplace and School Microaggressions	53.8%

Frequency of Microaggressions

For the second research question, "What is the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered?" a frequency distribution was conducted to determine the occurrence of each item during the past 6 months. In regards to Assumptions of Inferiority (AOI), a mean of (M = 2.26) indicates that participants reported experiencing it 1–3 times. Second Class Citizenship and Assumptions of Criminality (SCCACS) had a mean of (M = 2.29), indicating that participants reported experiencing this theme 1-3 times. With a mean of (M = 2.07), Microinvalidations (MI) were experienced 1-2 times by participants. With a reported mean of (M = 1.81) and (M = 1.78) respectively, Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity (EAS) and Workplace and School Microaggressions (WSM), participants, on average, report experiencing these racial microaggression once or not at all. Finally, in sharp contrast to the other themes Environmental Microaggressions (EM) had a mean of (M = 4.06) indicating that

participants experienced these types of racial microaggressions 6–9 times. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Frequency of Microaggressive Experiences over the Past Six Months

Variables	Frequency	M	SD
AOI	1-3	2.26	1.57
SCCACS	1-3	2.29	1.49
MI	1-3	2.07	1.31
EAS	0-1	1.81	0.89
EM	6-9	4.06	0.79
WSM	0-1	1.78	1.24

Relationship between Microaggressions and Academic Outcomes

In order to address the third research question, "What is the relationship between microaggression and academic outcomes?" the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient, *r*, was used to measure the association between the microaggression subscales and academic outcomes (as measured by GPA). A relationship or *r* of .70 or higher is considered strong; a .50 is considered moderate; and less than .20 is considered a weak correlation (Urdan, 2011). The correlations between the REMS scales and GPA were weak with a correlation of (r = -0.21) for EM and GPA, (r = -0.25) for SCCACS and GPA and (r = -0.29) for WSM and GPA. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Correlation Matrix for REMS and GPA

	GPA	AOI	SCCACS	MI	EAS	EM	WSM
GPA	1.000						
AOI	-0.178	1.000					
SCCACS	-0.249	.858**	1.000				
MI	0.056	.702**	.637**	1.000			
EAS	0.066	.653**	.651**	.613**	1.000		
EM	-0.206	-0.244	-0.249	-0.223	-0.095	1.000	
WSM	-0.289	.818**	.843**	.544**	.653**	-0.247	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Does Racial Identity Status Moderate the Relationship between Microaggression and Academic Outcome?

The fourth research question was "How does racial identity status moderate the relationship between microaggression and academic outcome?" In order to determine if racial identity status moderated the relationship between microaggression and academic outcomes, there would have to be a significant correlation between academic outcomes and microaggression. The results in Table 6 indicate that there was not a significant relationship between microaggression and academic outcome. Consequently, there was no significant relationship to be moderated and no reason to add another variable—racial identity.

Descriptive statistics for the CRIS are included in Table 7. Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive (IMCI) showed less variability than the other subscales. Respondents reported higher levels of this racial identity status, which was considerably

higher than the statuses of Pre-Encounter Self Hatred (PSH) and Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (IEAW). The remaining subscales (Pre-Encounter Assimilation, Pre-Encounter Miseducation, and Internalization Afrocentricity) were similarly distributed around the mean.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for the CRIS

Subscale	*N*	Min	Max	*M*	*SD*
PA	47	1	5	2.9773	1.04344
PM	47	1	4.6	2.5682	1.02883
PSH	47	1	4.6	1.9636	1.04528
IEAW	47	1	4.6	1.4136	0.70927
IA	47	1	5	2.4955	1.05256
IMCI	47	2.2	5	4.0864	0.67431
Valid N (listwise)	47				

Secondary Analyses

Based on the limitations of sample size and insignificant results regarding the relationship between racial microaggression and academic outcomes, secondary analyses were conducted to determine whether or not reports of microaggressions were significantly different across different demographics. The demographic variables that were salient for the mostly African American male participants were assessed. The REMS subscales included Assumptions of Inferiority, Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, Microinvalidations, Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, Environmental Microaggressions and Workplace and School

Microaggressions. The researcher ran a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the group mean difference between the REMS subscales and the demographic make-up of the high school the participant attended, the racial demographics of the type of community the participant was raised in, as well as the participant's socioeconomic status, and religion. Although there was no statistical significance between *most* of the demographic characteristics and the REMS, there was a single statistically significant difference ($F_{2, 36} = 5.635$, $p = 0.0007$) between the racial composition of the primary community in which a participant was raised and Exoticization/Assumption of Similarity. Since this was a secondary and exploratory analysis, the researcher used an alpha of .01 instead of .05. The remaining mean differences were not statistically significant. Group mean differences of the REMS and racial composition of primary community, demographic make-up of high school, socioeconomic status, and religion are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Group Mean Demographics from Secondary Analysis

Demographic Variable	**Choices**	**%**	**AOI Mean**	**SCCACS Mean**	**MI Mean**	**EAS Mean**	**EM Mean**	**WSM Mean**
Racial Composition of Primary Community	Mostly Black	43.5	2.09	2.24	1.83	1.63	4.3	1.66
	Mixed	32.6	2.09	2.14	1.89	1.59	3.93	1.73
	Mostly White	23.4	3.04	2.71	3.03	2.73	3.78	2.17
Demographic of High School	Mostly Black	43.5	2.46	2.51	2.25	1.88	4.06	2
	Mixed	32.6	2.13	2.08	1.8	1.7	4.12	1.56
	Mostly White	23.9	2.18	2.04	1.87	1.84	3.83	1.8

Table 8

(Cont.)

Demographic Variable	Choices	%	AOI Mean	SCCACS Mean	MI Mean	EAS Mean	EM Mean	WSM Mean
Socioeconomic Status	Poor	8.5	3.25	3.75	2.67	2	4.96	2.5
	Working Class	44.7	2.11	2.06	1.78	1.51	4.01	1.55
	Middle Class	42.6	2	2.12	2.03	2.03	3.96	1.73
	Upper Middle Class	4.3	3.75	2.5	3.56	1.94	3.43	2.6
Attend Religious Services	Seldom	21.3	2.35	2.41	2.47	1.68	4.33	1.53
	Occasionally	38.3	2.38	2.29	1.9	1.8	4.21	1.93
	Often	40.4	2.07	2.19	2	1.9	3.7	1.77

Summary

The aim of this research was to determine to what extent African American students at a predominantly White institution experience racial microaggressions in the classroom as well as the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered. Another purpose was to identify if there is a relationship between microaggressive encounters and academic outcomes. The final purpose was to explore whether racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. Findings from the preliminary analyses indicate that all of the participants experienced racial microaggressions, with most of the participants (97.4%) experiencing racial microaggressions that fall within the EM theme. Over 79% of the participants experienced racial microaggression that fall within the SCCACS, MI, and EAS themes. Almost 54% of the participants experiences racial microaggressions that

fall within the WSM theme. In regards to the frequency of microaggressive experiences, participants experienced AOI and SCCACS on average 1–3 times within six months prior to completing the survey. Furthermore, participants experienced MI 1–2 times. On average, participants experienced EAS and WSM once or not at all. In sharp contrast to the previously mentioned themes, EM was experienced on average 6–9 times within a six-month period. There was no significant correlation between racial microaggressions and academic outcomes. Consequently, examining racial identity as a moderating factor was unnecessary.

Due to insignificant results regarding the relationship between racial microaggression and academic outcomes, secondary analyses were conducted to determine whether or not reports of microaggressions were significantly different across different demographics. The demographic variables assessed were chosen based on themes that are salient for the mostly African American male participants. Group mean difference between the REMS subscales and the demographic make-up of the high school the participant attended, the racial demographics of the type of community in which the participant was raised, as well as the participant's socioeconomic status, and religion were assessed. Though a few trends were identified, there was no significant relationship between most of the demographic variables and racial microaggressions; however, there was a single statistical difference for the racial composition of the community the participants were raised in and EAS.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

An overview of research the findings are presented in this chapter. First, the findings from the preliminary analysis will be discussed. Then the results of a secondary analysis, a description of limitations of the study, implications for higher education, and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

Introduction

Racial microaggressions are subtle statements or behaviors, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory messages toward people of color (Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007). Due to its covert nature, racial microaggressions can have deleterious on African Americans, and has become pervasive in everyday life (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). For African American undergraduate students, microaggressive experiences in college can lead to low levels of achievement, which is an ongoing priority for students, parents, and the higher education community at large. Whether intentional or unintentional, racial microaggressions may lead to feelings of frustration, alienation, and anger (Sue, 2010). Undergraduate students have many other transitional issues to face when starting college; as such, it is the duty of higher education administrators to provide students with the tools necessary to effectively deal with all that they encounter. The literature reveals that racism in the classroom negatively impacts African American students and often leads to students dropping classes, changing majors

or leaving college all together (D. J. Lopez, 2005; Solórzano et al., 2000; Smith, 2004; Sue et al., 2009; Yosso et al., 2009); however, there is little research on how African American undergraduates at predominantly white institutions manage racial microaggressions in the classroom while identifying the role that racial identity plays in that process.

The current quantitative study attempted to identify whether or not African American students at a predominantly white institution experienced racial microaggressions, determine the most common microaggressions students faced in the classroom, investigate the relationship between racial microaggressions and academic achievement, and finally, explore what role racial identity played in how students dealt with the racial microaggressions. The students (n = 47) were given the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS), which measures how often participants had experienced microaggressions in the last six months. Participants were also given the Cross Racial Identity Scale, which measures racial identity attitudes. Respondents also completed a demographic questionnaire. This demographic information was assessed to identify any nuances within the group differences.

Findings

Main Analysis

The purpose of this study was to determine to what extent African American students at a predominantly White institution experience racial microaggression in the classroom as well as the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered. Another purpose was to identify if there is a relationship between

microaggressive encounters and academic outcomes. The final purpose was to explore whether racial identity status moderates the relationship between microaggressions and academic outcomes. Four research questions were developed to investigate these hypotheses. Statistical analyses were used to explore these hypotheses and the results are presented below.

Research Question 1. The first research question was "To what extent do African American students at PWIs experience racial microaggression?" The Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS) was used to measure perceived microaggressive experiences. The findings indicate that each of the racial microaggressions measured by the REMS was experienced during the previous six months by a majority of the respondents.

The most commonly experienced form of racial microaggression was Environmental Microaggressions. It is important to note the distinction between Environmental Microaggression and Workplace/School Microaggression. The Workplace/School Microaggression scale emerged after a factor analysis done by Kevin Nadal (2011) during the construction of the REMS. It is different in that it only focuses on microaggressions in workplace and/or school environments and is more interpersonal. Environmental Microaggressions are more perceptions of systems and/or institutions. Almost all of the African American student respondents (97%) experienced Environmental Microaggressions (EM). This may be due the pervasive nature of EM. Environmental Microaggressions occur on a macro level and can be packaged in symbols such as Chief Illiniwek, the mascot of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Also, they can be seen in institutions or organizations where upper level administrators are primarily White (Sue, 2010). It is difficult for African Americans living in our culture to avoid experiencing Environmental Microaggressions.

As discussed above, environmental microaggressions (EM) are macro-level microaggressions that are apparent on a systemic level. An example of this type of microaggression includes a college or university where most buildings are named after White heterosexual upper-class males, including new construction. This sends a clear message to minorities that they are not valued, they do not belong, or that they will only go but so far (Sue, 2010). Other examples include the absence of people of color in leadership roles, or a lack of program and initiatives aimed at improving the collegiate experiences of students of color. The messages sent suggest that people of color are outsiders or do not belong. The results indicate that study participants experienced environmental microaggressions at a much higher rate than the other subscales. This could be because the subscales are written inversely. In other words, the items measure positive perceptions about race instead of negative experiences with microaggressions (Nadal, 2011). For example, EM items were worded as follows*: I observed people of my race in prominent position at my school.* This item measures positive perceptions. Other items measured negative perceptions; for example, *Someone assumed I was not intelligent because of my race.* Furthermore, EM represents perceptions of participants' environment as opposed to microaggressions that occur interpersonally, which all of the other subscales do.

Over three-fourths of the respondents (75.4%) perceived that they experienced Assumptions of Inferiority (AOI) during the previous six months. This is no surprise, as Solórzano et al. (2000) have noted that professors sometimes have low expectations for African American students. In their study, a student asserted that his professor insisted that he retake a test because he did not believe he was capable of doing as well as he did. The finding in the current study suggests that AOI is pervasive, at least, for the (N = 47) participants in this study. Further research with larger and more evenly distributed sample size would be necessary to extrapolate this finding to the larger population at the university where this study was conducted. Another consideration could be the large percentage (94%) of male respondents. Previous literature indicates that Whites apply negative Black stereotypes differently to Black men and Black women (Watkins et al., 2010). Moreover, several scholars (Feagin, 1998; Gallien & Peterson, 2005; Tinto, 1993) posit that the stereotypes attached to African American male students in college are more often negative. Hence the student's knowledge of these negative stereotypes, particularly as they relate to academic abilities, may contribute to stereotype threat. Stereotype threat refers to being at risk of confirming, as a self-characteristic, a negative stereotype about one's group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Consequently, one could surmise that African American males entering a PWI may be sensitive to identifying events as AOI. According to Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996), Black students attending PWIs, particularly in the southern United States, are singled out as "affirmative action students or athletes" (p. 152). Anyaso (2007) contends that 67% of Black males who start college do not obtain a degree. This is particularly disturbing since African American males only

represent 4.3% of students attending college. Therefore, African American males, who statistically have lower rates of academic success than African American females, may report more incidents of AOI.

Over three-fourths of the participants (79.5%) also perceived that they experienced Exoticization/Assumptions of Similarity (EAS) in the past six months. Previous research suggests that there is some connection between AOI and EAS, as they both often occur in educational institutions (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). With EAS there is an assumption that all African American students have similar experiences and could therefore speak for their entire race. Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder (2008) found that African American students often resented being asked to represent their entire race when the instructor was discussing slavery or the Civil Rights Movement.

Workplace and School Microaggressions were experienced by a little more than half (53.8%) of the participants. They occur, as the name states, in the workplace or at school. Examples of this include experiences where offhand remarks or inappropriate jokes or statements were made in those environments. Those experiences often left students feeling insulted or angry (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008). A majority of respondents in that study reported experiencing this form of microaggression in which their viewpoints and contributions were discounted or assumed to be inferior. Perceptions of microaggressions are complex. According to Sue, Nadal, et al., (2008), "The type of denigrating [microaggressive] themes directed at Black persons seemed to be influenced by . . . the social situation or environment in which the microaggression occurred" (p. 86).

Second-Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality (SCCAC) was also perceived to be experienced by over three-fourths (79.5) of the participants. Solórzano and Yosso (2002), Sue, Bucceri, et al. (2007), and Nadal (2008) have found that African American students are more closely watched on campus as well as other public spaces. This form of racial microaggression also is prevalent for these students. The notion of stereotype threat may be relevant here. Young African American males are often presumed to be criminals. This coupled with research that reveals African American males are disproportionately on probation, on parole, or in jail may heighten African American men's sensitivity to SCCAC. Considering the recent verdict in the Trayvon Martin case, the assumption of criminality continues to be ubiquitous.

Microinvalidations were perceived by over three-fourths (79.5%) of the respondents. This finding is surprising as previous qualitative research revealed that microinvalidations were reported less frequently for African Americans than other forms of microaggressions (Sue, Nadal, et al., 2008), One reason for this difference could be that qualitative research allows for in-depth and complex exploration while quantitative is much more objective. If the participants in this study had an opportunity to discuss their experiences, it may have yielded different results. Additionally, participants in the current study reside (at least while they are attending school) in the southeastern United States, arguably a region of the country where they may be more likely to encounter microaggressions. The study by Sue, Nadal, et al., (2008), was done five years ago. The participants in the current study may be more aware of microaggressions and are better able to identify it. It is also important to note that incidents of microinvalidation may be

pervasive at the university where the present study was conducted due to the large discrepancy between the numbers of White full-time faculty versus Black full-time faculty. Twenty-one percent of the full-time faculty is from a minority group and only 5.6% of the minority group is African American (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2009). Further, the university does not *emphasize* addressing student experiences with racial conflict nor does it provide safe counterspaces—"sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate may be established and maintained" (Solórzano et al., 2000, p. 70).

Overall, the analysis for Research Question 1 indicates that, for *these* respondents, racial microaggressions measured by REMS are experienced by a majority of the respondents. For most of the forms of racial microaggression, over three fourths or more of the respondents reported experiencing most of them. If racial microaggression is pervasive for the participants in this study, how frequent is it? That question is explored in Research Question 2.

Research Question 2. The second research question was "What is the frequency with which various types of microaggressions are encountered?" Whereas the first research question focused on how many of the respondents had experienced the various forms of microaggressions, this research question focused on the frequency of those experiences. Although all of the microaggressions were experienced to some extent by a majority of the respondents (53.8%–97.4%), not all of the microaggressions were experienced frequently. Only one form of racial microaggressions was reported as being experienced frequently, Environmental Microaggressions (EM). For EM, respondents

reported a mean of 4.05 (*SD* = 0.79), indicating that respondents experienced this form of microaggression an average of 6-9 times in the past six months (i.e., more than once a month on average). Certainly it makes sense that the form of racial microaggression that was most pervasive among participants also was the form experienced most frequently. This may be due to the pervasiveness of EM in our society. Environmental Microaggressions are global and may be experienced through interpersonal interactions (Sue, 2010), from a philosophy such as color-blindness (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008) or visually (C. Pierce et al., 1978).

> Environmental microaggressions are powerful and can be transmitted through numerical imbalance of one's own group (Purdue-Vaughn et al., 2008), mascots or symbols, and in accurate media portrayals of marginalized groups in films, television, radio, print media, and educational curriculum (books, course content, films, etc.). The sheer exclusion of decorations, literature, and ethnic aesthetic-cultural forms like music, art, language, and food can also assail . . . racial . . . identity. (Sue, 2010, p. 27)

Respondents indicated that they experienced three other types of microaggressions 3–6 times during the previous six months. For Assumptions of Inferiority, respondents reported a mean of 2.26 (*SD* = 1.57), indicating that they experienced this form of microaggression an average of 1–3 times in the past six months. For Second Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality, respondents reported a mean of 2.29 (*SD* = 1.49), indicating that they experienced this form of microaggression an average of 1 to 3 times in the past six months. For Microinvalidations, respondents reported a mean of 2.07 (*SD* = 1.31), indicating that they experienced this form of microaggression at 1–3 times over the last six months. The occurrences of being

assumed inferior, criminal, or a second-class citizen have been reported in previous studies with African American samples (Sue, Nadal, et al., 2008; Watkins et al., 2010). Perhaps participants perceived these microaggressions more frequently because they are experienced on a societal level, such as television, video games, or movie characterizations, or overrepresentation of African Americans in prison populations. Constant indirect exposure to these experiences may create an acute awareness.

The final two types of microaggressions measured by the REMS are Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity and Workplace and School Microaggressions. For Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, respondents reported a mean of 1.81 (*SD* = .891) indicating that they experienced this form of microaggression an average of once or not at all in the past six months. For Workplace and School Microaggressions, the respondents reported a mean of 1.78 (*SD* = 1.24) indicating that they experienced this form of microaggression an average of once or not at all in the past six months.

Although over three-fourths of the respondents reported experiencing Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity, these findings indicate that they experienced this form of microaggression infrequently. Similarly, over half of the respondents reported experiencing Workplace and School Microaggressions; however, these appear to have been experienced infrequently as well. One consideration regarding the low number of occurrences may be because of the age group (19–24) of participants in this study. For this millennial group, a large number of participants were raised in mixed or mostly White communities. Therefore, they have had years to develop coping skills to handle perceived microaggressions. Furthermore, growing up in diverse

communities may have desensitized participants to microaggressive experiences. Overall, responses to this study indicate that the experiences of racial microaggressions in these themes are not frequent.

Research Question 3. The third research question was "What is the relationship between microaggression and academic outcomes?" Correlations between the scales of the REMS and academic achievement as measured by self-reported GPA were weak. Respondents reported GPA between 3.96 and 1.20 with a mean of 3.03 and a standard deviation of .52. Relying on participants to provide an unbiased and accurate report of their GPA can be problematic since this information cannot be verified. The literature reveals that students with higher ability report more accurate GPAs (Gilger, 1992; Kuncel, Credé, & Thomas, 2005). The restriction of range of GPA scores (1.20–3.96) and limited variability also contribute to limited correlation with the REMS scales (Furr & Bacharach, 2014). One reason why this study may not have revealed a significant relationship between racial microaggression and academic achievement could be due in part to the low completion rate of this study as well as the disproportionate gender differences of the participants. Previous literature purports that "some negative Black stereotypes are differentially applied to Black men and Black women, making their experiences of racism nuanced by their gender identities" (Watkins et al., 2010, p. 72). The sample size of this current study includes (n = 44) males and (n = 3) females. Consequently, any differences revealed in *t*-tests and one-way analyses may be due to this gender difference in sample size as opposed to any true differences.

Research Question 4. The fourth research question was "How does racial identity status moderate the relationship between microaggression and academic outcome?" Since the correlations between GPA and the REMS were weak, there was no significant relationship to be moderated; therefore, there was no reason to add another variable. Secondary correlation analysis of racial identity subscales and GPA are discussed in the next section.

Secondary Analysis

This study found no relationship between racial microaggression and academic achievement; however, an assessment of variables with close to normal distributions was done to determine whether or not reports of microaggressions were significantly different across different demographics. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to examine the group mean differences between the REMS subscales and various demographic characteristics including the demographic make-up of the high school the participant attended, the demographic make-up of the type of community in which the participant was raised, as well as the participant's socioeconomic status and religious importance. These demographic variables were chosen to determine whether or not reports of microaggressions were significantly different across different demographics. Additionally, these demographic variables were salient for the mostly male participants as they relate to academic outcomes.

An analysis of variance between the REMS subscales and racial composition of the primary community in which a participant was raised revealed that participants who were raised in mostly White communities reported more experiences with

microaggressions across the board; however, the biggest mean differences were found in the Exoticization and Assumptions of Similarity and Microinvalidation subscales. A larger sample size may have provided the power necessary for more variance to be observed. Findings also reveal that participants who attended mostly Black high schools reported more experiences with microaggressions; however, the differences were not significant. A larger sample size or a more even gender distribution may reveal more significant results. An analysis of REMS and family's socioeconomic status showed a trend where the higher participants were in social class, the lower their experiences with EMs; however, the sample size in the poor and upper middle class statuses were very small. An analysis of family's socioeconomic status and the REMS subscales also showed an inverse relationship where the higher participants were in social class, the lower their EM. Conversely, the lower participants were in socioeconomic status, the higher their EM. Participants from a higher socioeconomic background may be more assimilated into the dominant culture, and therefore, do not recognize EM.

A Spearman's correlation analysis between religious importance and EMs did not yield significant results; however, the trend suggests a pattern where higher EMs are paired with lower religious importance; this trend is supported by studies indicating that spirituality positively influences self-esteem and create a sense of belonging (Astin et al., 2011; Bryant et al., 2003; Riggins et al., 2008). Furthermore, a seven-year study examining, in part, the relationship between spiritual development and achievement found that growth in equanimity—a capacity to maintain one's sense of calm and centeredness—enhances student's GPA, self-rated ability to get along with other races,

psychological well-being, and satisfaction with college (Astin et al., 2011). The study findings suggest that the participants, who engaged in spiritual activities, were better able to deal with EMs. If the (N = 47) in the current study were higher, a correlation between religious importance and all of the REMS subscales may have been revealed.

Trends in Racial Identity Status and GPA

In an effort to identify trends in the data, the researcher in this study conducted a correlation analysis between racial identity subscales and GPA. The number of participants who reported their GPA was (N = 35). The descriptive analysis of GPA revealed a mean of 3.03, which was negatively skewed at -1.08. The correlation analysis revealed that anti-white was negatively correlated (-.367) with GPA. As GPA increased, identification with Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (IEAW) status went down. Those participants who reported lower GPAs on average indicated increased identification with IEAW status. This relationship was mirrored with Internalization Afrocentricity (IA). Respondents who reported higher identification with IA reported lower GPAs, and those who reported lower identification with IA reported higher GPAs. This is in contrast to research, which revealed IA was positively related to high self-esteem and academic success (Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001). One explanation for the finding in the current study may be that students operating from IA status reflect a keen awareness of their Blackness, which may lead to feelings of isolation in a predominantly White setting. Because the IA perspective is a strong identification with *one* group, a lack of social connections and support may be related to low academic achievement. Further analysis also revealed a moderate relationship between the Pre-Encounter Assimilation

(PA) stage of racial identity and experiences of Workplace and School Microaggressions (WSM). As a participant's assimilation increases, their experiences with WSM decrease. Given that this stage of racial identity development reflects an unawareness of racism, it is likely that those in the Pre-Encounter Assimilation stage did not recognize any instances of WSMs even if they occurred.

Limitations

The limitations described in Chapter I were identified in anticipation of the study. One assumed limitation was that the results would not be generalizable beyond the specific population from which the sample was drawn. Another assumption was that since the researcher could not have control over respondents' honesty, results might not accurately reflect the opinions of all racial and ethnic minority students. Also, the instrument used relies on participant self-report; therefore, results may not be objective. Unlike behavioral observations or experimental research designs, self-reporting is vulnerable to response bias. As a result, participant factors such as accurate memory recall of previous thoughts, behaviors, and feelings as well as identity salience and awareness should be taken into consideration. This does not, however, mean that all self-report measures are not valid; such measures have proven useful for gathering social science research data (Chan, 2009; Ericsson & Simon, 1993). Finally, the participants' level of racial identity development may affect their perceptions of racial microaggressions (e.g., Sue & Sue, 1999). Although these limitations are valid, the results of this study should be considered in the context of several additional limitations.

The completion rate of the survey was low. A number of factors may have contributed to this. The participants were recruited through campus student organizations. Although this is an effective and popular method for obtaining participants (Illingworth, 2001), there may be bias towards students who participate in campus organizations. Furthermore, a sample from a single public southeastern institution limits the ability to generalize to other institutions. Additionally, the survey was lengthy, requiring 20–30 minutes to complete. The number of students who began the survey but did not finish it supports this as a significant factor in the completion rate. Less than half of the respondents completed the full survey. This created power issues, given the sample size, and prohibited significant results. Furthermore, of the 47 participants who completed the survey, some items were left blank or answers were incomplete so the sample size varied depending on what analysis was being done.

Another limitation is that the participants were primarily male (93%). One reason for this difference in gender size could be due, in part, to the high retention rate of African American females at the institution where the study was done. It could be that the subject of this study is not salient for African American females, which impacted their willingness to participate. Another reason for this difference in gender sample size may have occurred because the researcher sent the survey for this study to the members of an all-male email listserv who were the primary respondents to the survey. All other surveys were sent to representatives from departments or organizations who were then supposed to forward it to potential participants. The researcher could not determine

whether those departments and organizations actually forwarded the survey. A more balanced distribution of sexes might have yielded different results.

In retrospect, the REMS may not have been the best measure of racial microaggression in the classroom. Although two of the questions were altered, with the author's permission, to indicate instructor and classmate, it was unclear as to whether or not all microaggressions were classroom related, campus related, or extra-institutional related. The REMS is a new measure that focuses on several subscales. Making adjustments to the instrument to only measure microaggressive experiences in the classroom would have been beneficial. Another consideration is that the REMS did not allow participants to identify whether or not microaggressions were being perpetrated by faculty, staff, or other students, thereby making it difficult to make specific recommendations on how to address these experiences.

Implications for Practice

Findings indicated that for participants in this study, all types of racial microaggressions measured by the REMS, particularly Environmental Microaggressions, are pervasive. A majority of respondents reported experiencing each of the forms of racial microaggression. Since the measures used in this study did not allow participants to identify whether or not their microaggressive experiences stemmed from interactions with faculty, staff, or fellow students, this researcher would suggest that faculty, staff, and students in higher education need to be aware of how common the experience of racial microaggressions are in the lives of African American college students. Perpetrators of racial microaggressions are often unaware of their participation in

perpetuating this subtle form of racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008). Raising critical awareness can shed light on the ambiguity of racial microaggressive experiences that often lead to confusion for African American students as they attempt to identify and confront the perpetrators of these incidents. Moreover, faculty, staff, and students in higher education need professional development opportunities and student activities that can provide an understanding of racial microaggression so that institutions can collectively begin to develop strategies to address the systemic nature of racial microaggressions, as well as develop more inclusive strategies for attracting and retaining African American students, faculty, and staff.

Findings also indicated that the most frequently experienced form of racial microaggression was Environmental Microaggressions. In order to address the issue of Environmental Microaggression on college campuses, institutional leaders must first create positive role models at the leadership levels. When students see the provost or professors showing a commitment to creating a bias-free environment, they may be more likely to feel at ease. Another component of creating positive role models at the leadership level includes attracting, hiring, promoting, and retaining administrators and faculty of color. Next, institutional leaders should decrease microaggressive experiences by providing students of all races with forums where their voices can be heard. This can be accomplished through the facilitation of diverse individual and group interactions, focus groups, and culturally inclusive spaces where microaggressions are acknowledged and addressed in a non-defensive manner. Allowing students voices to be heard through meaningful conversation about race validates their experiences and feelings. Moreover,

creating culturally inclusive spaces is essential because they provide a comfortable climate, which allows for support and nurturing. It is no surprise that African American students report feeling a high level of comfort when culturally inclusive spaces where faculty, staff, and African American students are visible (Watkins et al., 2010).

Three other forms of microaggression (Assumptions of Inferiority, Second Class Citizens and Assumptions of Criminality, and Microinvalidation) were reported as having been experienced during the past six months by a majority of the respondents. These forms of microaggression have particular relevance for the classroom. Previous research has shown that the theme Assumptions of Inferiority is salient for African American students (Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010; Utsey, Giesbrecht, Hook, & Stanard, 2008). The notion of stereotype threat—awareness that one can be judged based on stereotypes of a particular racial/ethnic group (Steele & Aronson, 1995)—may contribute to an explanation of why Assumptions of Inferiority is a salient theme for these students. Research has shown that assumptions of racial inferiority often remain the same even when contradictory evidence is present (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Solórzano et al., 2000). Since the respondents to this survey were primarily male (97%), gender should also be considered when assessing these themes. According to Smith (2010), Black males are victims of gendered racism. He further asserts that the Black male bears the weight of two negative social identities; the first as a member of the African American race and the other as a Black male replete with separate stereotypes or anti-Black male ideologies. It stands to reason that African American males would have a heightened sensitivity to these microaggressive experiences.

Additionally, African American students who perceive microaggressive themes, such as Second Class Citizen and Assumptions of Criminality as well as Microinvalidations, in their college environment feel less connected to the institution, are more likely to have decreased motivation relative to academic success, and endure depression and isolation (Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, & Holder, 2007; A qualitative study conducted by Sue et al. (2009) revealed that it is imperative that educators acknowledge their own biases and fears about race. According to the study, "many . . . participants mentioned that teachers seemed unaware of racial issues, what their Whiteness . . . meant to them, and seemed uncomfortable in their own skin" (Sue, 2009, p. 189). Furthermore, African American students believed that White students often read the emotive state of their professors and followed their lead" (p. 189). Sue (2003) contends that education and training for faculty and staff must include experiences outside the classroom that "involve interaction and dialogue with people (a) who differ in race, culture, and ethnicity and (b) in real-life settings and situations (minority communities, public forums, integrated neighborhoods, etc." (Sue et al., 2009, p. 189). This would provide faculty and staff with an increased ability to identify racial microaggressions in themselves and in general, as well as, the impact that these experiences have on African American students. It has been suggested that culturally inclusive spaces where difficult conversations about race are fostered and demystified can help students to process microaggressive experiences. Moreover, Academic Affairs professionals should make it a priority to develop and obtain curriculums, texts, and classroom materials that are culturally inclusive.

African American males embark upon the campuses of PWIs with the knowledge that society expects less from them (Hopkins, 1997). Moreover, African American males have the highest attrition rates among all collegiate demographics (McClure, 2006). Consequently, they have unique needs. If college administrators are committed to addressing the needs of *all* students, policies as well as the programs that flow from those policies should counteract negative stereotypes. Finally, university leaders must regularly evaluate and assess initiatives to continuously develop cultural competency in administrators, faculty, and staff (Bourke, 2010; Sue, 2010).

The current study sought to contribute to the evidence of the impact of racial microaggression. In addition, exploratory analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between racial microaggression, racial identity, and academic outcomes. Although the findings of this study related to impact were not significant, the findings and trends from the secondary analyses are potentially far reaching. Evidence from this study suggested students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and mostly Black communities experienced more Environmental Microaggressions (EM). Moreover, a correlation between the importance of health and religion and academic success suggested a pattern where higher EM is paired with lower health and religious importance. The aforementioned findings suggest EM, which are macro-level microaggressions and more prevalent on systemic levels, would be a good place to start in order to minimize microaggressive experiences. Certainly, individual change is necessary, but it can be undermined by the principles of the current structure. However,

systemic change moves beyond the individual where stakeholders can make more prolific, sustainable changes.

Implications for Future Research

Although the results only scratched the surface of some of the aforementioned inquiries, further research could reveal significant relationships between racial microaggressions in the classroom and academic outcomes. A study similar to the current study should be done with a larger sample size with a more even distribution of gender. The researcher in this study hypothesized that racial identity could possibly moderate how students handle microaggressive experiences. However, an exploratory study investigating the various ways that African American students at PWIs cope with racial microaggressions would be more informative. Utilizing an instrument to measure coping such as Folkman and Lazarus's (1985) *Ways of Coping Questionnaire* would provide more insight into how students cope with racial microaggression.

A mixed methods approach entails "the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a single or multiphase study" (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005 p. 224). A future mixed methods study utilizing qualitative measures such as interviews and focus groups along with a quantitative measure such as a survey that measures different types of microaggressions African American students face specifically in the classrooms of PWIs would provide a more complex description of the intangible factors associated with racial microaggressions. Also, future inquiries could answer the following questions? Do different microaggressive themes more likely to elicit particular responses? Does gender play a

role in how students are impacted by each type of microaggression? Does the role (e.g., faculty, staff, classmate, resident assistant, roommate) of the perpetrator of racial microaggressions lead to different reactions from the recipient? It is conceivable that the status relationship between the victim and perpetrator would influence how the racial microaggression is perceived.

The secondary analysis of the current study revealed a trend, which suggests a correlation between the importance of religious participation and EM. A future study that focuses on the relationship between spirituality of African American college students and all of the microaggressive themes may reveal that students who are spiritually grounded are better able to cope with racial microaggressions. Colleges could then provide opportunities for these students to nurture their spirituality.

An additional line of inquiry could be the investigation of microaggressions on the campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). A major appeal of HBCUs for African American students is that it provides an environment that shields students from racism (Cokley, 2002). Once there, do students experience racial microaggression from White faculty and staff? Since HBCUs are often considered safe havens for African American students, is the impact more detrimental there than on the campus of a PWI? Based on geographic demographics, would HBCU students from predominantly white communities experience microaggressions differently than students from predominantly African American communities?

Finally, future researchers might want to explore how faculty, staff, and students might be taught to recognize racial microaggressions and develop skills to overcome

personal biases. This is imperative because research indicates that racial microaggressions have detrimental personal, emotional, social, and academic effects on its victims (Solórzano et al., 2000). Microaggressions are also present in classroom activities and educational materials (Reynolds et al., 2010; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2009). Scholars have further implicated microaggressions as a culprit in causing psychological and physical health disparities (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007). Moreover, findings confirm that there is a connection between racial identity and resilience. It is important to note that the insidious and universal nature of racial microaggression often makes it difficult to be detected by the perpetrator and victim alike. Further research will increase the public's critical consciousness and awareness of racial microaggressions as well as provide an enlightened understanding of the dynamics of racial microaggressions in an effort to enhance difficult dialogues on race (Sue, 2010). Future research will also provide higher education institutions with strategies to eradicate the systemic nature of racial microaggressions that are embedded in higher education culture and effectively institute initiatives and programs to decrease microaggressive experiences.

Conclusion

The racial and ethnic landscape of the United States continues to change and unfortunately racism is still ubiquitous, although not as overt in its new form-racial microaggression. Whether intentional or unintentional, racial microaggression is quite distressing to people of color (Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, & Holder, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, Nadal, & Torino, 2008; Sue, Lin, et al., 2009; Sue, 2010). Racial microaggressions can negatively impact the

academic outcomes of African American students at PWIs, including an increased risk of attrition (Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, 2010). Consequently, it is imperative that there is a better understanding of the experiences of African American students at PWIs as a means of improving retention rates and academic outcomes. Though the findings from this study did not identify significant relationships between racial microaggressions, academic outcomes, and racial identity, they do suggest that students in this study have experienced racial microaggressions and potentially certain demographic factors may impact how they interpret microaggressive experiences. Hopefully, this study will contribute to the growing research on racial microaggressions, particularly their ramifications for African American students.

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APPENDIX A

RACIAL AND ETHIC MICROAGGRESSIONS SCALE

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS)
Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D.
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Instructions: Think about your experiences with race. Please read each item and think of how many times this event has happened to you in the **PAST SIX MONTHS**.

1 = I did not experienced this event.
2 = I experienced this event 1– 3 times in the past six months.
3 = I experienced this event 3– 6 times in the past six months.
4 = I experienced this event 6– 9 times in the past six months.
5 = I experienced this event 10 or more times.

1. I was ignored at school or at work because of my race.
2. Someone's body language showed they were scared of me, because of my race.
3. Someone assumed that I spoke a language other than English.
4. I was told that I should not complain about race.
5. Someone assumed that I grew up in a particular neighborhood because of my race.
6. Someone avoided walking near me on the street because of my race.
7. Someone told me that she or he was colorblind.
8. Someone avoided sitting next to me in a public space (e.g., class, restaurants, movie theaters, subways, buses) because of my race.
9. Someone assumed that I would not be intelligent because of my race.
10. I was told that I complain about race too much.
11. I received substandard service in stores compared to customers of other racial groups.
12. I observed people of my race in prominent positions at my school.

13. Someone wanted to date me only because of my race.
14. I was told that people of all racial groups experience the same obstacles.
15. My opinion was overlooked in a group discussion because of my race.
16. Someone assumed that my work would be inferior to people of other racial groups.
17. Someone acted surprised at my scholastic or professional success because of my race.
18. I observed that people of my race were the CEOs of major corporations.
19. I observed people of my race portrayed positively on television.
20. Someone did not believe me when I told them I was born in the US.
21. Someone assumed that I would not be educated because of my race.
22. Someone told me that I was "articulate" after she/he assumed I wouldn't be.
23. Someone told me that all people in my racial group are all the same.
24. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in magazines.
25. An instructor or classmate was unfriendly or unwelcoming toward me because of my race.
26. I was told that people of color do not experience racism anymore.
27. Someone told me that they "don't see color."
28. I read popular books or magazines in which a majority of contributions featured people from my racial group.
29. Someone asked me to teach them words in my "native language."
30. Someone told me that they do not see race.
31. Someone clenched her/his purse or wallet upon seeing me because of my race.
32. Someone assumed that I would have a lower education because of my race.
33. Someone of a different racial group has stated that there is no difference between the two of us.

34. Someone assumed that I would physically hurt them because of my race.
35. Someone assumed that I ate foods associated with my race/culture every day.
36. Someone assumed that I held a lower paying job because of my race.
37. I observed people of my race portrayed positively in movies.
38. Someone assumed that I was poor because of my race.
39. Someone told me that people should not think about race anymore.
40. Someone avoided eye contact with me because of my race.
41. I observed that someone of my race is a government official in my state
42. Someone told me that all people in my racial group look alike.
43. Someone objectified one of my physical features because of my race.
44. An instructor or classmate treated me differently than White classmates.
45. Someone assumed that I speak similar languages to other people in my race.

APPENDIX B

EMAIL CONFIRMING PERMISSIONS TO USE RACIAL AND ETHNIC MICROAGGRESSION SCALE

UNCG Mail - Measuring Instrument--Microaggression

Spartan

Andrea Fernandez <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

Measuring Instrument--Microaggression

9 messages

Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com> Sat, Jun 12, 2010 at 2:13 PM
To: amwatt2@uncg.edu

Dear Andrea,

I'm happy to hear that you are interested in the scale. I am attaching the scale here. My team and I are still working on our psychometric properties, but once we have that (which should be soon), I'll be able to reply with that.

Take care,

Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Psychology
Deputy Director, Forensic Mental Health Counseling
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
City University of New York
Email: knadal@gmail.com
Website: www.kevinnadal.com

> From: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>
> Date: Wed, 9 Jun 2010 12:16:30 -0400
> To: Kevin Nadal<knadal@jjay.cuny.edu>
> Subject: Measuring Instrument--Microaggression
> Dr. Nadal,
>
> I am interested in conducting quantitative research on microaggression. I
> was told by Dr. Sue that you have developed a microaggression scale. Where
> can I find out more about this scale?
>
> Thank you,
> Andrea
>
> --
> Andrea Watt-Fernandez

> Graduate Assistant
> Office of Sponsored Programs
> University of North Carolina at Greensboro
> (336) 334-5878
> amwatt2@uncg.edu
>

REMS_FINAL_45.docx
13K

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Mon, Jun 14, 2010 at 11:39 AM
To: Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com>

Thank you so much!
[Quoted text hidden]

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Tue, Jun 15, 2010 at 11:53 AM
To: Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Nadal,

Thanks again for sending the REMS to me. I know that you are still working on the psychometric properties, but will there be sub-scales? Also, I want to use this scale with African American college students and their classroom experiences at a PWI, how would you feel about me changing the wording in questions 25 and 44 to reflect instructor and classmates?

Thank you so much for your time,
Andrea
[Quoted text hidden]

Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com> Thu, Jun 17, 2010 at 8:36 PM
To: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

Andrea,

It would be okay for you to change the items as needed, as long as you cite the original language in your paper. I'm still working on the psychometrics but should have that by Monday.

Take care,
Kevin
[Quoted text hidden]
--
Sent from my mobile device
[Quoted text hidden]

Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com> Fri, Jun 25, 2010 at 9:54 AM
To: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

Andrea,

Here are the psychometric properties. Please let me know before you publish, as we might tweak some final details.

good luck!

--
Kevin L. Nadal, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Psychology
Deputy Director, Forensic Mental Health Counseling
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
City University of New York
Email: knadal@gmail.com
Website: www.kevinnadal.com

[Quoted text hidden]

REMS_Packet_06.25.10.doc
74K

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Fri, Jun 25, 2010 at 10:50 AM
To: Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com>

I certainly will. Thank you so very much!
[Quoted text hidden]

> Graduate Assistant
> Office of Sponsored Programs
> University of North Carolina at Greensboro
> (336) 334-5878
> amwatt2@uncg.edu
>

REMS_FINAL_45.docx
13K

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Mon, Jun 14, 2010 at 11:39 AM
To: Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com>

Thank you so much!
[Quoted text hidden]

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Tue, Jun 15, 2010 at 11:53 AM
To: Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Nadal,

Thanks again for sending the REMS to me. I know that you are still working on the psychometric properties, but will there be sub-scales? Also, I want to use this scale with African American college students and their classroom experiences at a PWI, how would you feel about me changing the wording in questions 25 and 44 to reflect instructor and classmates?

Thank you so much for your time,
Andrea
[Quoted text hidden]

Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com> Thu, Jun 17, 2010 at 8:36 PM
To: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Wed, Sep 8, 2010 at 1:16 PM

To: Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com>

Hi Kevin,

I definitely want to use the REMS for my research. In regards to getting permission, is there some formal way to go about that or is email enough?

Thanks,
Andrea
[Quoted text hidden]
--
Andrea Fernandez

Kevin Nadal <knadal@gmail.com> Wed, Sep 8, 2010 at 1:59 PM

To: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

Hi Andrea,

An email is fine. Just keep me posted of your results!!

Kevin
[Quoted text hidden]
--
Sent from my mobile device

[Quoted text hidden]

Andrea Fernandez <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Wed, Feb 27, 2013 at 2:44 PM

To: Andrea Watt-Fernandez <mrsafernandez@gmail.com>

[Quoted text hidden]
--
Andrea Fernandez

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APPENDIX C

CROSS RACIAL IDENTITY SCALE

CROSS RACIAL IDENTITY SCALE

Instructions: Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings, using the 7-point scale below. There are no right or wrong answers. Base your responses on your opinion at the present time. **To ensure that your answers can be used, please respond to the statements as written**, and place your numerical response on the line provided to the left of each question**.**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	As an African American, life in America is good for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2.	I think of myself primarily as an American, and seldom as a member of a racial group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.	Too many Blacks "glamorize" the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4.	I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am Black.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5.	As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6.	I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8.	When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9.	I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I believe that only those Black people who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. I hate the White community and all that it represents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in who that person might be.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be "American," and not African American.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. White people should be destroyed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am an American, and second I am a member of a racial group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. African Americans are too quick to turn to crime to solve their problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, posters, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. I hate White people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. I respect the ideas that other Black people hold, but I believe that the best way to solve our problems is to think Afrocentrically.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. When I vote in an election, the first thing I think about is the candidate's record on racial and cultural issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, because this connects me to other groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. I have developed an identity that stresses my experiences as an American more than my experiences as a member of a racial group.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36. Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work and education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree	strongly agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Black people will never be free until we embrace an Afrocentric perspective.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
38. My negative feelings toward White people are very intense.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
39. I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.).	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

APPENDIX D

EMAIL CONFIRMING PERMISSIONS TO USE CROSS RACIAL IDENTITY SCALE

UNCG Mail - Re: CRIS

Spartan

Andrea Fernandez <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

Re: CRIS
3 messages

Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu> Mon, Jan 31, 2011 at 3:56 PM
To: William.Cross@unlv.edu

Yes, that is correct.

On Mon, Jan 31, 2011 at 2:20 PM, <William.Cross@unlv.edu> wrote:

> No problem but where are you studying? U f North Carolina Greensboro?
>
> Bill
>
> From: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>
> To: william.cross@unlv.edu
> Date: 01/30/2011 07:00 PM
> Subject: CRIS
>
> Dr. Cross,
>
> I am conducting research to explore the impact of microaggressions that African American students encounter in the classroom at predominantly White institutions, and particularly how student's responses to these experiences are mediated by their racial identity and ultimately impact academic outcomes. I want to use the Cross Racial Identity Scale and would like your permission to do so.
>
> I look forward to hearing from you.
>
> Thank you.
> --
> Andrea Fernandez
> Graduate Student
> Higher Education Administration

--
Andrea Fernandez

William.Cross@unlv.edu <William.Cross@unlv.edu> Mon, Jan 31, 2011 at 4:10 PM
To: "Frank C. Worrell" <frankc@berkeley.edu>
Cc: William.Cross@unlv.edu, amwatt2@uncg.edu

Dear Frank,

Please grant student permission to use CRIS and send manual and info on CRIS to him Thanks.

BC

----- Forwarded by William Cross/UNLV on 01/31/2011 01:09 PM -----

From: Andrea Watt <amwatt2@uncg.edu>
To: William.Cross@unlv.edu
Date: 01/31/2011 12:58 PM
Subject: Re: CRIS

[Quoted text hidden]

Frank C Worrell <frankc@berkeley.edu> Mon, Jan 31, 2011 at 5:16 PM
To: William.Cross@unlv.edu
Cc: amwatt2@uncg.edu

Already done.

Frank
****
[Quoted text hidden]

--

****

Frank C. Worrell, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, Academic Affairs
Director, School Psychology Program
Faculty Director
Academic Talent Development Program
Off: 4427 Tolman Hall

Mailing Address:
Cognition and Development
4511 Tolman Hall
Graduate School of Education
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720-1670

Faculty Director, California College Preparatory Academy (Cal Prep)

Off Ph: (510) 643-4891
SPSY Ph: (510) 642-4202
SPSY Fx: (510) 642-3555
Em: frankc@berkeley.edu

ATDP Ph: (510) 642-4027
ATDP Fx: (510) 642-0510
ATDP: http://www-atdp.berkeley.edu/

http://www-gse.berkeley.edu/faculty/FCWorrell/FCWorrell.html

http://www-gse.berkeley.edu/program/sp
Join Division 16! http://www.indiana.edu/~div16/
<http://www.indiana.edu/%7Ediv16/>

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT EMAIL SENT TO ORGANIZATIONS

Copy of Email Sent to Organizations

Good Morning (*Organization Advisor*)

I am currently a graduate student in the Higher Education Administration doctoral program here at UNCG. I am conducting research entitled "Exploring the Relationship between Racial Identity, Microaggressions, and Academic Outcomes among African American Students in the Classrooms of Predominantly White Campuses." The purpose of this research is to explore the extent to which African American students at PWIs experience microaggressions (subtle forms of racism) in the classroom, and particularly to what extent various components of racial identity moderates their responses to these experiences, and ultimately the extent to which this moderates academic outcomes.

In order to gather data, I will use two instruments the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS), which contains 40 items and the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS), which contains 45 items. I would like to target undergraduate African American students; as a result, I am seeking permission from (*Organization*) to attend a few of their meetings to share what I am doing and to ask for volunteers.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fernandez

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE RECRUITMENT EMAIL SENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Copy of Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Andrea Fernandez, and I am a PhD student working under the supervision of Dr. Deborah Taub in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The reason that I am contacting you is that I am conducting research that explores the extent to which African American students at PWIs experience microagressions.

I am currently seeking volunteers to participate in this study. Participation involves completing a demographic questionnaire as well as two surveys.

If you are interested in participating, please click on the following link: *(Embedded link to the survey)*. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (*Researcher contact number and email address*) or Dr. Taub at (*Professor email address*).

Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fernandez

APPENDIX G

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Spartan

Andrea Fernandez <amwatt2@uncg.edu>

IRB Notice

1 message

IRB <irbcorre@uncg.edu> Wed, Apr 18, 2012 at 9:22 AM
To: djtaub@uncg.edu
Cc: amwatt2@uncg.edu, irbcorre@uncg.edu

To: Deborah Taub
Teacher Ed/higher Ed
310B Curry Building

From: UNCG IRB

_____
Authorized signature on behalf of IRB

Approval Date: 4/18/2012
Expiration Date of Approval: 4/17/2013

RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)
Submission Type: Renewal
Expedited Category: 7.Surveys/interviews/focus groups
Study #: 11-0157
Study Title: Exploring the Relationship Between Racial Identity, Microagressions, and Academic Outcomes Among African American Students in the Classrooms of Predominantly White Campuses

This submission has been approved by the IRB for the period indicated.

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which African American students at predominantly white institutions experience microagressions in the classroom, and particularly to what extent various components of racial identity moderates their responses to these experiences, and ultimately the extent to which this moderates academic outcomes.

Submission Description:

Renewal request, dated 4/17/12. Enrollment of new participants continues.

Regulatory and other findings:

This research meets criteria for a waiver of written (signed) consent according to 45 CFR 46.117(c)(2).

Investigator's Responsibilities

Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to submit for renewal and obtain approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without IRB approval. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in automatic termination of the approval for this study on the expiration date.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. These consent forms must be used unless the IRB hasgiven you approval to waive this requirement.